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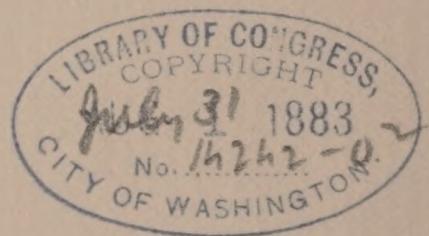
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THE LOVE POEMS  
OF  
LOUIS BARNAVAL

*EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION*

BY

CHARLES DE KAY  
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TO  
MARIA TERESA DE KERLEREC  
FORMERLY  
MARIA BARNAVAL  
OF  
TENSAS PARISH, LOUISIANA



FEW duties are more delicate and harder to fulfil than a literary trust. It is not easy to draw the line between things sacred to the individual and things the public must know ; and in the end one is tempted to print all there is, just as the manuscript was left. But even then there are gaps to be closed, the intention of the author to be guessed, order and sequence to be introduced in papers, for the arrangement of which only the faintest clews remain.

But suppose personalities have to be protected ; suppose the story must be told and yet the actors screened from publicity ; suppose that she to whom the greater part refers be still alive, and yet her identity is to be jealously guarded ; suppose, finally, the materials are in the shape of verse. A new-comer need expect little grace at a time when the flood of books of verse known and unknown becomes a spring freshet. Yet it is always possible, viewing the large part which the unexpected has played in literature, that the posthumous work of a native singer will be read, partly from curiosity, partly from patriotism, and that judicial minds will not be frightened, if they find the touch that of an amateur rather than a professional poet. It may be that some recognition will reward the editor for his pains,

since a money return is not to be thought of. But there is always satisfaction in dealing with a work from which the money question is absent, and which appeals only to the true lover of art. In justice to the friend whose wishes are now being carried out, these are advised to read no further: Persons who have a natural indifference to verse, persons who affect to slight verse for fear of cheap ridicule, persons who pretend to love it because others do. The first waste time on what they can never hope to understand, the others are shams.

His full name was Louis Barnaval de Kerlerec, but, for obvious reasons, he never used his last name. He had his bread to win in a hard school, and the foreign look of his name was enough to prejudice many business men against its owner. At one time, perhaps a trifle loftily, Louis Barnaval called himself a citizen of Louisiana, and when a mere lad he once fought to disrupt the Union. There met in him the strains of several French families founded at the beginning of the last century in that southern portion of New France which was to join hands with Canada and establish in the Mississippi Valley a great nation to the westward of the English, Dutch, and Swedish colonies of the seaboard—a nation which might furnish France with such magazines of men and supplies as Great Britain appeared to have founded for herself so well and so wisely on the Atlantic coast. Grudgingly supported, betrayed, and at last shamefully sold to Spain, they turned for allies to the most civilized tribes of natives, and although wars and bloody outbreaks occurred, their policy was, on the whole, tolerant

and humane. Anticipating Jean Jacques Rousseau, now and then one who felt keenly the indifference of the home authorities would take a native to wife, especially if she were beautiful and highborn, the alliance a source of strength, the tribe on a grade of civilization higher than is now thought possible to Indians. For to some of them there was a philosophical pleasure in mixing two races that had such opposite virtues and vices as the French and the Indians.

Such a man was a certain M. Barnaval, one of whose ancestors had long before accompanied the Spanish conquerors to South America. Through him the mother of Louis Barnaval is said to have obtained a strong infusion of Natchez blood ; yet her portrait would not lead one to suppose so. There befell greater contrasts of penury and wealth to the planters of French and Spanish stock than to the hard-working colonists of the North. Climate, the enormous wealth of their plantations, Indian and negro slavery with all their enervating results, habits of feudal command and feudal lavishness, were so many hindrances to the handing down of fortunes. The ruin of families was hastened by the attraction of Europe. If Canada was depleted of men of mark and rank because these returned to France as soon as they could, much more was Louisiana stripped of her natural leaders. Madrid used to beggar the conquerors of Mexico and Peru ; Paris devoured the princely estates of Louisiana. So that, in truth, it was no novelty in the family history when Louis Barnaval found his name and lands a drag rather than an aid in the struggle of life. Not a

little disgusted, as he grew older, with the attitude of men who had done least in the civil war, and were now loudest in denouncing the victors, Louis decided not to sulk on his crippled plantation and try by sharp practices to wring from the freedmen the advantages of the slave epoch, and more.

In 1872 he left his mother at New Orleans, where at least she could see one or two old friends who dwelt obscure in the French quarter, and tried to get work in San Francisco. Was there some one in Tensas Parish, I have wondered, for whom he had formed an early attachment, unspoken then, never directly alluded to afterward? From the tenor of some regretful lines, I have sometimes believed there was. Perhaps because in the war he was a boy, perhaps because he had hit hard and been fairly hit in return, he alone of his surviving kinsfolk found himself generous toward the Yankees. And I have guessed that this heresy, detested by all good Southern women, had something to do with his silence regarding that boyish attachment, which, it must be confessed, may itself be a figment of the brain. The foolish fellow actually admired the solemn, newspaper-devouring Yankee who riddles all the Americas and Russia to boot with railroads, stamps on the measureless prairie till it laughs in harvests, fights to the death with his brother for an idea during exactly a presidential term, and then returns with equal sincerity and blundering success to the ways of peace; the man who is a born mechanic and inventor, who puts his energy to subduing not the weaker among his neighbors, but the earth and the

forces of nature. It may surprise a citizen of the North, unapt to cherish illusions regarding his fellow-countrymen ; but this young offshoot of aristocrats, all the more intolerant for being provincial, passed several years employed to no better purpose than in revolving schemes to make his way to New York. There was he to amass that fortune with which he might reach the highest point of modern civilization in its most practical, mechanical, unromantic phase. Forgive the day-dreams of a country youth : New York was his earthly paradise ! But in itself, or in its power to buy him personal comforts, wealth was nothing. The dreams of his young manhood never saw the millionaire as too often he appears. No ; the latter was a man who cared little for himself, everything for his fellow-men and country. To the innocent fancy of Barnaval the stamp of patriotism was known by the liberal spirit which uses money, and the lever of man's abject awe of money, in all ways that are beneficent, unselfish, highminded, wise. I remember one plan was to open the Southern States to the ideas of the North on education, reflecting little on the prejudices to be encountered ; he even dreamed of founding a daily paper to cement the bonds of North and South. Perhaps it was as well that he never became a rich man.

Let me recall my friend so far as I am able without allowing the partiality natural in the case to overcolor the picture. He was tall and slender and had smaller hands and feet than some people like, because they suggest a want of manliness. He was very smooth-skinned, olive, low-voiced, and the most restfully indolent of men when

no work was on hand. He hated pain and was nervously sensitive to hurts. Looking at his almond-shaped eyes and carefully arranged hair, his long well-trimmed nails, his dainty silk stockings and high-heeled slippers, you would mark him for a fop and a do-nothing. No one ever heard him discuss clothes or caught him looking in a glass. At once the manliest and the purest man I knew, he was capable of singular energy if there was need. He did not know what fear was. Yet to see him roll a cigarette was to lose at once all that frenzy for movement which is latent in the air of New York. One felt that there was still time enough in an ordinary life to achieve the most difficult things. To see the glow and sparkle of his oval face, to hear him say "when I am rich," made one quite secure of the nearness of that questionable millennium and to believe in its beauty. When I first knew him, before despair had wrought lines into his face and sickness wasted the fine outlines of his figure, expression and voice would have given hope to the most skeptical. Never was there a man who believed more thoroughly in his own destiny. But it was without an atom of conceit or trace of self-consciousness. Until he met a rock which was indeed absent from the chart of life he had traced for his own guidance, until in his ignorance he dashed on it again and again instead of escaping at once with as little hurt as possible, he was the most inspiring and yet resting comrade it has ever befallen me to know. His verses, however, prove that an unquiet spirit lay only half controlled under his will.

Let me be just to the woman who was more immedi-

ately the cause of his shipwreck. She had not been brought up as he. If a flirt, then she was one of the North American variety, supposed to mean and therefore to do no harm. The young men her friends in early life took matters of love very calmly, not to say lightly, and were apt to refer to the passion in a tone of burlesque. She could hardly be expected to realize, at first, that here was a man of an entirely different physique, temperament, race, and bringing up, who regarded her not at all as a flesh-and-blood girl, to be treated more respectfully and tenderly than a sister, but rather as a half-goddess like the queens of the Indian epics. It must have startled and amused her to be talked about as a fiery young Arab or a Crusader fresh from Palestine might speak of his mistress. And when Barnaval caught the American spirit a little awry and fell, as lovers will, to quarrelling, he went too far. His moods may well have been much more abrupt than any in her experience, and perhaps it was natural to resent them. And many of his poems must have far from conciliated or moved her. It was curious that one so gentle could write so fiercely. And yet—who knows how many of them ever reached her ears or eyes? But after she had thoroughly revenged herself—how then? Small use in moralizing. It must have been his fault as much as hers that an unlucky love affair was renewed when every reason existed on both sides why they should move sternly onward by the paths fate or their folly had marked out. Nay, his more than hers. Because on her side divorce was possible as a last resort, but by his church such an alliance was forbid.

But between male and female offender what saint shall decide?

How often have I sat and watched the fine line of his face against the window as he read me the first draft of a poem either on his lady-love or on some public theme, or, most curious of all, in relation to his own religion. I have omitted from this book almost all that do not belong to his passion. The face reminded me—for the beautiful can remind of the grotesque—of profiles found in stone and stucco on ruins in Yucatan. Did that come from the touch of Indian blood assigned by tradition to a branch of the Barnavals? Or from climate, assimilating the Gallic to the native type? Or was it sheer imagination? Criticisms of his poems vexed him like a child. He could hardly bear to listen to objections against the use of idioms faintly Gallic; but he was apt to change them afterward. Not that I cared to trouble him, for in my partial ears they sounded delightfully original. But since they are now to appear, I must obey him and cut many out, while I smooth some of the rougher lines into order as well as I can. Would that each reader, instead of noting with severity the errors I have made, might take a pencil and polish lines, rearrange stanzas, fix for himself the sequence of the poems as to his thinking it seems best. Louis Barnaval is now in some region where we must suppose the petulance of an author yields to larger moods, whence he may be able to look into our hearts and see who has tried to be his friend this side of the grave.

It was in one sense all my fault. He was here almost

friendless and quite alone, full of fresh will and energy, stern in his resolve to make a fortune. A warm nature such as his was sure to make friends soon, but a city boarding-house seldom offers the best acquaintances for an ambitious youth. It was hinted that if he were introduced to a few good families, not only would he avoid undesirable acquaintances, but among business men his chances to succeed would be better. Readers may decide whether there is anything in this theory. After some hesitation—for under a bold exterior he was really timid—he made his bow in several drawing-rooms, was liked, asked to dine, and presently was known in a small circle as a well-bred youth with no complications in the way of undesirable kinsfolk to interfere with an easy-going acquaintanceship. And certainly he was by nature a gentleman, handsome to boot, apparently ready for anything of a social nature that is bright and pleasant. There was no question of a cordial acceptance everywhere, except among families who inherit an old-fashioned intolerance of persons with dark complexions and foreign-sounding names, and an abhorrence of Catholics. Hazard had it that at one of the first gatherings to which he went he saw a daughter of such a family—people worthy, rich, pretentious, narrow as the horse-hair sofas that still linger in their sitting-rooms, and as hard. That she should relish the handsome phenomenon, if for no other reason than that he was in utter contrast to the staid, unemotional young men she had seen before; that he should mistake her open, if not really frank admiration for love, and that her family should at

once take alarm and brand him with the terrible name of adventurer, are things too normal to be more than mentioned. Had he been enormously rich, there would have still existed a coldness toward him on account of his religion ; but he could have married her. He was, however, only by a metaphor the owner of the coat on his back the very night when his fate was sealed. It availed nothing that he had more wit, heart, and inbred courtesy than all the males of her family put together. They were of the majority. They approved King Co-phetua's match in the story-book. They belonged to the class of people who, with a pietistic humbug not uncurious, enjoy the smug parson who rises from an excellent breakfast to denounce in a pulpit hung with velvet and silk the greed and selfishness of worldlings. As they sit, fat, in high-priced pews, they are made sad and given the frame of mind proper to the Sabbath. But then they are reminded once more that they are rich. Let a man without his necktie accost them, let their pockets be assailed, let an alliance be suggested in which all material goods are not offered in barter for sons or daughters, and mark the change. All their money, social habit, philosophy, go for nothing ; the mask of the gentleman falls and shows the boor.

If I am warm it is because at times this charming fellow was their victim. He who seldom had mean thoughts did not suspect that others were mean-thoughted. He had on one side of his character a childlike openness to rebuffs that used to make me grind my teeth. Occasionally I could spring to the rescue and make the snob

wince with choice bits I had picked up in a desultory reading on the early history of the commonwealth. But for the most part I had to let Barnaval stand the pinch, or stab, or blow. His lady-love, be it said, never countenanced such things ; she was the saving clause in the mean chapter of her family ; yet she had a keen tongue and a wit as sharp as a Sheffield blade. Louis soon felt its edge ; and I fear she enjoyed nothing so well as to torment him ; but when she had driven him from her a look would cross her face that explained his infatuation. Never was there a woman who could be more divinely compassionate. About her husband, whose tragic end completed the ruin of poor Barnaval's health, it is difficult to speak. He was not a brilliant man, but one who made many friends. He was a good husband, but liable to be hasty and impolitic. It was weak of him to try to escape the situation by a journey that gave rise to all sorts of comments. His return was so secret and the preparations for the duel so well guarded that to this day he is believed to have died suddenly abroad. And his death by the bullet of Louis was the greatest shock to the latter ; for it is certain that Barnaval aimed wide, and pointed his pistol at the ground. Luck would have it that the bullet struck a stone and glanced. Barnaval stood, badly wounded, but the other fell dead.

After all, it was natural enough that Barnaval, as he brooded over his lot in a squalid room on Bleecker Street and felt his life ebbing away, should have been seized with a fixed idea, and exacted a promise that his verses should see the light. Perhaps he wished that she

to and about whom the greater number were written might see them in print. Or it may rather have been the desire that our united country, whose welfare had been dear to his dreams, should hold of a steadfast admirer and critic some other trace besides the tombstone that stands white and raw in a quiet old village looking seaward across the Hempstead marshes. He wrote severe things, which I have not thought worth while to print, of his country and the "commonplace yet singular" folk thereof. But his love for the woman who helped no little to bring him to his grave was not unlike that for his own land. He adored her but hated what he thought were her faults. And he was guileless enough to tell her so. But I confess that some of his verses seem to me unjust. His feeling likewise for the Church in which he was baptized, but not buried, was of a piece with this. He loved the Church of Rome. Yet the things he said of the Church and her administrators were so severe that in our talks the Protestant was generally found her champion and defender. Singular contradiction ! one exclaims. And yet—is it so singular? Are not most of us doing something quite as fantastic and contradictory? There is everything else to say about Louis himself, his wit, his character, his charm ; and there is great temptation to discuss his verses. But this introduction is already too long ; those who will care for his work at all will prefer to make their own criticisms and draft their own commentary ; a friend often harms by praising unduly.

I see these two unlucky young people before me in

memory as they stand side by side in a brilliantly lit ball-room with that indescribable consciousness of each other's presence which betrays two persons who are deeply interested the one in the other. What a handsome pair, what a contrast! Her looks were such as make a division in the world; one party delights in, the other depreciates them. Yet surely hers was a fascination seldom found. And fascinating she is still, although too much luxury and too many passions, perhaps also an undercurrent of remorse, have played havoc with her charms. Will these lines ever meet her eye as she wanders restlessly about Europe? And if they should, will they renew memories of youth and delights; or merely wound? Can there be one among the few friends of Barnaval that remember him who cherishes a harsh thought toward a woman so gifted and so unhappy? Assuredly no. But so much cannot be said of her who was more than his friend, of an old lady whose photograph I have and prize, the solitary white-haired mother that lives on—who knows how?—in the quiet of the dilapidated barrack at New Orleans. She looks up no longer when she hears the jaunty step of the letter-carrier in the quadrangle outside. The scion of an old French stock, it was before the heart of his mother that Barnaval poured the dregs of his misery.



LOUIS BARNAVAL

*PART I*



I

WHEN from the sacred porch you issue out,  
Hymn-book in hand, sober from thoughts devout,

You look the reborn child of a Crusader,  
A vision dewy from the rare old time.

I cannot ask your love. It is a crime.

Within my breast upsprings a sharp upbraider  
For this my fault in seeking you to win,  
For folly, sin.

I move beside you up the decorous street,  
With looks all fire our liquid glances meet,

Then do I feel the strength to bring you blessing ;  
It cannot be that love so deep as mine  
Could fail to stay you like ethereal wine,

That you could thrive without my soul's caressing,  
Should not without me loathe each-morning sun  
Wan, sad, undone.

But when your feet upon your doorstep rest  
And no emotion heaves your virgin breast,

The noiseless owl despair swoops down and covers  
My heart with midnight wings. 'Tis all in vain  
I call on memory for that glance again,

Poor hare atremble in the press of lovers !  
No use, no hope ; farewell for aye, too fair !  
I do not dare.

## II

Three times had nature silently replaced  
    My every atom slowly,  
Nor ever to the fourth time was it come,  
When first these ingrate eyes of mine were graced  
    With sight of one most holy  
That keeps unchallenged in my heart a home,  
Wherfrom shall never roam  
My wayward thoughts to any other woman,  
    For in that hour an omen  
Touched me with shudd'ring finger-tips of dread  
While love and fear and wrath whirled through my luck-  
    less head

She swayed out slim among the flower-like girls,  
    Artful, and yet most simple,  
Her broad white brow was shadowy with a frown,  
About her lips were little scornful curls,  
    Unmirthful was the dimple  
Whence Cupid fast and wrathfully had flown,  
    And her fine clinging gown  
All of her save one narrow slit must prison  
    To trouble reason  
With dazzle cool, as when the lily's bud  
Too weak is grown to compass beauty's flood.

III

Her smile's a flower that vernal joy possesses  
Most perfectly ; surcharged with dewy grace,  
It looks from out the still pool of her face,  
A lotus blowing in the water-cresses,  
An orchid that the bayou's heart expresses,  
But O, more subtly ! at its bloom the trace  
Of self and worldliness can find no place  
In all her being. Have you seen the guesses

At shapes the painter makes in leafy robing  
Of rich magnolias ? Then forego the chase  
O thoughts too bold and quit, O eyes, your probing

For curves like patterns latent in a lace.  
Below her gown the small feet dip and dance  
As flower-like, nearly, as her smile and glance.

IV

When with other women stands  
She I love  
They should fly at her commands  
Since, above,  
Towering on her shapely throat  
A head of chieftain seems to float.

When with maidens moves the maid  
Black of brows  
Quickly are they cast in shade,  
Fate endows  
Her with such a charm of ways  
As poets may not reach with praise.

## v

Ask of voices in the twilight  
And of waves along the shore,  
Ask of pine-trees when they murmur  
Sound that's music to the core—  
Peradventure they can tell  
Ill or well . . .

Ask the sunset o'er the mountain  
And the white cloud and the brown,  
Ask the larches in the gloaming  
If delight may wear a frown—  
For there lurks in sylvan dell  
Many a spell . . .

Ask the woods ablaze at midnight  
And the northern wildfire dance,  
Ask the red moon o'er the ocean  
For a flame that haunts a glance—  
Marvels greater oft befell  
Monk in cell . . .

Ask the lines of lapsing water  
And the cypress in the wind,  
Ask the lovely curves of islands  
For a grace that heals the blind—  
Caught in whorls of little shells  
Beauty dwells . . .

Ask of thrushes brown of pinion  
And the dayfly's velvet wing,  
Ask the golden heart of pansies  
For the daintest living thing—  
Bees have tolled when branches swell  
Winter's knell . . .

Ask. And if all nature loves you  
Melodies, and clouds, and moon,  
Forms of beauty, woodland perfumes,  
Each and all shall serve as rune  
Whence the maiden's name to spell  
I love well.

## VI

Through the door I watch her candid  
Place within my world ;  
Lightly etched on cloud and banded  
Sky she stands from heaven landed  
Diamonded and pearled  
Where the earth-damp curled.

Wrapped in maiden thought, her golden  
 Hair with chastity  
 Bright, in youth and light enfolden,  
 Purenness, candor, that embolden  
 Coyer things than she :  
 She is—just a tree !

Just a tree, whose buds are yellow  
 With the hope of green  
 And with warning of the mellow  
 Autumn, contrast both and fellow,  
 Fragrant woodland queen  
 Filled with spices keen !

O my tree, alive with juices  
 From earth's bosom poured,  
 Maiden tree that love induces,  
 Vernal miracle that looses  
 Leaves in black bark stored  
 As from sheath a sword,

Tree of swaying figure, utter  
 Unto me your heart,  
 Chant the secret rune I stutter  
 In your windy tresses mutter  
 Sounds with virgin art  
 Near and yet apart;

Open, ope your buds and bending  
Down with leaf and branch,  
Be you me from baseness fending,  
Coolness in the world's heat lending,  
Make me strong and staunch  
On life's tide to launch ;

Wisdom of the forest reach me  
Tell the lore of stars  
Conned through winter nights and preach me  
Truths undying, ay, and teach me  
Love that shatters bars,  
Love that laughs at scars.

Do like Juno's bird that hovers  
Passionate o'er his she  
Till the sun-wheel gently covers  
With a golden dusk the lovers  
One in ecstasy :  
Love me thus, O tree !

VII

No maid to you compares, great heart,  
For savory sweetness and for cruel mirth,  
For marvellous tang ;  
None may your sense of breezy force impart,  
As when Diana spurns the leaf-strewn earth  
And bright bows twang

When the crisp winter moonbeams lead by night  
 The clear cool orb that rises from the sea  
 To freeze those lovers that disdain to flee.

And yet how often on my startled sight  
     You spring in alien forms,  
 How many another woman you resemble !  
 Is it to curb my pride a tricksy spright  
     With touch of you informs  
 This and that dame where pretty dames assemble ?  
 Perhaps for that I love you all the more :  
 You are yourself, and yet include the host  
 Of them whom when I sneer I love the most.

I sneer, but God knows set by them great store.  
 What arid streets, what houses of despair  
 Without these ladies light and blithe of heart  
 Who ponder garments like a mystic lore,  
 Mix millinery with a daily prayer,  
 Add outward graces to their inner art,  
 And soothe men with a smooth and hidden might !  
 From her I love all others I infer :  
 Women, I love you all, because of her.

## VIII

Love is not blind, as foolish men suppose,  
 But through the folded veils that close  
 His eyes the quenchless rays sublime  
 Pierce ; and love laughs at darkness, space and time.

IX

Two glorious suns were once your eyes.  
Too glorious ! wherefore mortalwise  
Two moons eclipsed them in blue skies ;

But always where the splendor stood  
Mysterious golden shadows brood  
As sunbeams pierce the deepest wood.

X

In all the world who's like to you,  
Who has that bearing of a noble,  
The great proud antelope eye, the true  
Firm look, the curved mouth fresh and mobile,  
Fit for a king of kings to woo  
Since all the earth has not its double ?  
Who has the lines from chin to shoon  
Of which I think not lest I swoon ?

I love, hate, fear you all in one,  
Your scornful ways contract my heart  
But hardly has my wrath begun  
Your sweetness beams through every part ;  
No surer starteth up the sun  
Than followeth rapture on my smart.  
O, am I sad for you, or grateful,  
My compound strange of dear and hateful ?

It were enough if you were dumb  
And left all language to your eyes.  
For ten poor lovers now, would come  
A thousand whom you might despise  
And yet be popular, as some  
Silent old hermits held for wise.  
But when those chiselled curvings straighten  
Your lovers fly as if from Satan.

Savage, and child of modern days ;  
Woman, yet cruel ; rich, yet rude ;  
What mixture strange of barbarous clays  
With power of witchcraft you endued ?  
I seem to loathe and still must praise ;  
I try forgetting, yet must brood ;  
You are not civilized ! I rave :  
Your home is some dark hunter's cave.

## XI

I know not how there comes upon your features  
A shining light no other of God's creatures  
Can show like you. About your eyebrows playing  
Its fine St. Elmo gleams, anon 'tis swaying  
Your tawny hair, and when you fix your glances  
From every part of face and figure dances  
The white strange light.

Now therefore do you wonder  
If sometimes, overawed, I make a blunder ?  
I and my foolishness at least are human,  
But you . . . at times I know you are not woman.

## XII

I love you passionately—beyond the sea ;  
Adore you tenderly—across the town ;  
Most fondly doat when sight can tell your frown  
From smiles across a garden's verdancy ;  
But at your voice I grow so cold, so cold  
It seems an iceberg lies within my breast  
And at your hand's touch there has through me rolled  
A secret chill and every vein's oppressed . . .

Alas, in love how false the saw  
Possession is nine-tenths the law.

In dreams you are more savory than wine,  
Smoother than ebon, of a dulcet sound  
Beyond musicians who men's care have drowned,  
Proud of yourself, more proud of being mine.  
But in the flesh some curst and crooked spite  
Bids you be pert and talk of random things,  
So all the reverence builded up by night  
Falls with a crash ; and then a demon sings

Aha, in love how false the saw  
Possession is nine-tenths the law.

## XIII

No, no, you are not a flirt,  
 'Tis a term for common people ;  
 You are offish, fierce, and curt,  
 Stiff and upright as a steeple.  
 But, how comes it ? your repulses  
 Have the virtue of a call,  
 Your disdain the heart convulses  
 That is cool when flatteries fall !  
 'Tis a way of Indian wont,  
 O most artless, thoughtless maiden,  
 Still to fly a hostile front  
 While with guile their minds are laden :  
 Thus disdainful timorous you  
 Pierced me, helpless, while you flew.

## XIV

There is a bird with handsome form and bright  
 Quick darting eyes who flits all smiles of peace  
 Through copses where the feathered warblers cease  
 Their carols never save when hawks affright.  
 It is a dainty bird, blue, gray and white  
 And seems right glad in life's abundant lease,  
 In its own beauty and the cradling tree's  
 Low windy harping to the fair sunlight.

Anon it flutters where small twigs are stirred  
With fluffy balls of down ; there twitterers play  
Fearing no comer in such gentle guise ;

Too long, alas, too confident they stay :  
A shriek is heard, a scattering in surprise,  
And one more songster feeds the butcher bird.

## XV

Lovely is Kearsarge. Towering from the vale  
She calls with many a wavy plume of green ;  
At evening, clothed with purple shades are seen  
Her beauties massed along the sky-line pale ;  
But scarce her bosky foothills ye assail  
When steeps are found, thickets and sheer ravines ;  
Where tenderness was looked for at the scenes  
Of rude convulsion and of hate ye quail.

O cruel love of mine, who seemed at distance  
So noble and so pure, so fair, wise, good,  
In me your charm could never meet resistance ;

It stole one day into my very blood.  
Since when I must press on, though now I know  
Too late, too well, the weeds your gardens grow.

## XVI

Detestable base Anglo-Saxon mind,  
 Filled full with love of lucre and the pride,  
 The stupid prides which in those clowns reside  
 Who still to art and courtesy are blind !  
 You do not see how worse than unrefined  
 Is your pinch-featured, pale and trading race,  
 Whose very jostling in their hard-won place  
 Proclaims the world they're not the genuine kind !

And then, on all that, you must strut ! Poor child,  
 It is not you the sneering world should blame.  
 Have not your parents your young thoughts defiled  
 With greed and vainness ? Was it not their aim  
 To make you match with millions and to curl  
 An ah, too ancient lip at love, sweet girl ?

## XVII

How wise you are ! Yet not so wise  
 As you suppose. Your wisdom shows  
 In ways you least of all surmise,  
 As thoughtless as a nodding rose,  
 Like sweet or bad thought in some eyes ;  
 And yet I love the vice that grows  
 From that rare vase your boastful heart  
 Like shapes in poisonous bogs apart.

XVIII

And do you know you have a look  
Nor boastful now, nor shrewish either,  
A foolish far-off stare that took  
My eye when we would come together ?  
With scorn of you I fairly shook,  
Then forced the talk upon the weather ;  
The scowl grew deeper on your brow . . .  
My God, I love that fool's look now !

XIX

Divinely awkward : so the infant maid  
Plays with her doll and in her ignorance  
Is blithe and unafraid,

And though her pranks and hoyden glee entrance,  
How soon—and down will tumble doll and child  
In midst her dance !

But pity springs that one so fair and wild,  
So foolish, yet who yields a trenchant blade  
By her most potent charm should be of peace be-  
guiled.

## xx

Pity—it is the life and death of love !  
 It stirs affection, gliding from above  
 Like the forerunner drops upon the sand ;  
 Pity—a weapon good when men will wive ;  
 Ay, seize it then ! but see that, love alive,  
 Far it is banned !  
 Let lovers feeling it confess and shrive ;  
 For with it mean contempt goes hand in hand.

## xxi

Strangest of all—I love you so  
 Meseems no other loved before !  
 And yet, at times, I do not know. . . .  
 Why cannot I be blind ? adore  
 Your sweet perfections and bestow  
 No thought on things that grieve me sore ?  
 Hush, if I doubt my love for you  
 Nothing is real, nothing is true.

Perhaps my love for you is all  
 Of my own self a reflex action,  
 And when by night I groan and call  
 Your name, it is a mere abstraction,  
 An echo sounding from a wall  
 That fancy clothes with some attraction.  
 So, after all is said and done,  
 I the old circle round have run.

In days Arcadian lucky men  
Perceived there lurked a gamesome maiden  
Behind each boulder, down the glen  
The air with answering peals was laden ;  
But later on came science ; then  
Half-wisdom sought all hope to deaden.  
Arcadia beckons. Still I sue.  
Arcadia is not, wanting you.

My love's an echo, you a wall  
Stiff mortised, moveless, harsh, unyielding.  
And yet there was a trumpet call  
That broke walls once. So fair a building  
Must have fair dwellers, and the fall  
Lies most with him the trumpet wielding.  
Shout out ! no more let there be echoes cheating !  
Open your gates ; loves must be meeting.

## XXII

Have you a soul ? These many months I strive  
To meet its traces.  
Have you a brain ? These many weeks I drive  
My shafts in divers places,  
Yet never strike the honeycomb which sweetens all the  
hive.

Your body lives. And long have I been thrall  
 To touch and color,  
 But neither lips, nor hands, O soft, O small !  
 Can still my dolor,  
 Since without soul the fairest shape I do not prize at all.

## XXIII

My own lost girl, my little one,  
 Your faults are washed off in the sea  
 Of drowning grief like sailors blown  
 From tossing masts far, far to lee.  
 A hero seems each shipmate gone  
 To comrades left in agony ;  
 So do your faults appear far dearer  
 Than virtues to the lonely steerer.

Come back, come back ! Alas ! too late ;  
 The poet says, what pen has written  
 No more shall be erased. The plate  
 Will show the mark by acids bitten.  
 All after-woe is vain ; grim fate  
 Laughs at the writhings of the smitten.  
 Ah, if you care to know, I writhe :  
 Pray God, that your dear heart be blithe !

I never loved till now. Not you,  
 No one till now has filled my heart,  
 And this I know is surely true  
 Because not all of the sophist's art

Can make your foibles vices. New  
Bright conquering virtues crowd each part.  
I am not dazzled, but my wide eyes see  
Through the rare shadows of variety.

## XXIV

Ah, you are right. 'Tis not for me to raise  
My darkling thoughts to such a height as thine.  
Here in the caverns of this dismal mine  
I'll toil my span and end my weary days.  
But who, alas, will fill my vacant place ?  
Who will, as I would, for your sake resign  
Ambition, rest, and comfort ? Who will twine  
With roses on your path each dusty place ?

True love within this world is oh, so rare !  
Suppose you wed, and he, though not unkind,  
Be merely careless ! That were a despair

Too great for me : to think that laws can bind  
You to a living corpse will surely give  
Such grief to me I care no more to live.

Let me regard the future with an eye  
That blinks at nothing. In the well-dressed crowd  
Whom shall you notice, who shall be allowed  
To win where others found scant courtesy ?

The hard man who is humble till the day  
 That makes you his ? he whose philosophy  
 Is clipped from books ? who thinks it right to pray  
 Because free-thinking's vulgar ? who can ply

A coachman's whip above a lumbering carriage ?  
 O, you are far too diamond-bright a soul  
 To waste your brilliance in a model marriage.

I know, I know your hungry thoughts will roll  
 Back to the day when from a smiling face  
 Three words came forth that robbed my life of grace.

## xxv

Without your presence can I ever rest ?  
 And yet you snap your fingers at my pain  
 Nor care that having dragged me from my way  
 You thrust me back to horror. I confessed  
 My care at once ; have you no faint, faint strain  
 Of sympathy ? You passed the other day  
 Lordly, indifferent in your coach. The trick  
 Is cheap and yet it cut me to the quick.

## xxvi

I hate your friends and kindred ; as against the swamp  
 The cardinal flower delights the soul with awe  
 And scarlet tanagers the hemlock grove illume  
 And glow-flies light by night an incandescent lamp

And storms have globes of flame that oft the sailor  
saw,  
Your splendor juts sublime against the neighboring  
gloom.  
So from the mud of Tiber, buried deep and moldering  
long,  
The marbles rise yet beautiful in spite of greed and  
wrong.

## XXVII

Ah childhood, and the tales that sink  
Below the tide of childish minds !  
A touch, taste, smell, and to the brink  
Ye rise ; by ones, by twos the rinds,  
The filmy rinds of memory shrink,  
Its kernel-core the past unwinds :  
And eyes of infancy retrace  
A coppery but how loving face !

‘ When Louis dreams ’ (I hear her prate)  
‘ One soul within his bosom stays  
Another feathery soul, elate,  
On wings of fire will thread the ways  
Of airy distance while its mate  
Keeps watch at home ; where’er it strays  
An instantaneous sympathy  
Between your double soul shall be.’

By yellow floods O yellow nurse,  
 Sole remnant of a vanished race,  
 Your lesson I to-night rehearse  
 At midnight, waking in my place,  
 With gladness dumb, yet grieved the worse  
 At gladness gone, since by the grace  
 Of some good god, I ventured far  
 Beneath my twin-soul's double star . . . .

Abroad, abroad ! Its wings are hushed  
 As wings of snowy birds of night  
 When to the stem of pine tree crushed  
 The snowbird cheeps in eaves of white  
 And shades dark green. Abroad it rushed,  
 My frolic soul, for it had sight  
 Of something, half-way, which was known  
 As mine at once, yet not mine own.

Then back by telegraph whose thread  
 Is fine beyond the wit of man  
 In me abroad the joy that bred  
 To me at home with tidings ran,  
 So glad, so wild ! ' Beware,' we said,  
 ' Such joys have sorrows in their ban !  
 Yet, yet with future ills have done,  
 Are we not one, forever one ? '

## XXVIII

Think not to grasp, or here, or there, or yon  
The happiness a strong self-centre craves ;  
The oozy deep is full of moveless graves  
Of them that false hope threw its rays upon.  
Think not, beyond the lovely lines that gird  
Your breath from air, breath that is faint perfume  
Wafted from shrines all frankincensed and myrrhed,  
The whole wide world for happiness has room.

Within that ivory ring shall you discover  
Love that gives all and asks naught of a lover.  
'Tis self-abasement fills the perfect sphere

And glads the world. Already, woman dear,  
As comrade watches come to tick in tune,  
The same thoughts move us, be it dawn or noon.

## XXIX

Then give me friendship and content therewith  
Let me march on across the dreary waste,  
Your river-water let me merely taste  
And I'll believe the springs of love a myth  
No man shall find ; for soon the tender pith  
Of love in me shall be so firmly cased  
In harshest bark, you'll swear I have displaced  
Whatever love calls kin, or passion kith.

But seek no other friend. I would be yours  
 Yet not yours either. Let us marriage make  
 Such as no others in the world can join :

Will you the spirit's vows upon you take  
 To be my friend, the while that life endures,  
 A wife—and yet no maiden right resign ?

## XXX

For your perfections not a word have I,  
 Lameness infects my glib and fearless tongue,  
 Less lovely others it has boldly sung,  
 But you—you dash its wonted bravery.  
 Delightful? lovely? charming? such words fly  
 Blunted like arrows back ; I cannot fashion  
 One arrowy phrase of my o'ermastering passion  
 That even will flutter to your maiden sky.

You cast such witchcraft suddenly from your eyes  
 That like the hero of the Gaelic story  
 My knees give way and, careless of all glory,

I seek through prayers to reach your paradise.  
 I love you so, sinews are all unstrung  
 And womanish tears into my eyes have sprung.

## XXXI

When fury seizes you, amazement fills  
With awe mine eyes ;  
What you despise  
Is dulness less than wonder wide that spills  
From the small box of brain—  
The stress and strain  
Of too great loveliness my spirit kills.

Know that the passion that will most deform  
Illumes you quite  
With such a light  
As when suns harp with golden hands the storm  
And myriad fingers tear  
The streakéd air  
Till shivering men their hearts in glory warm.

But I'm the tempest grown ah, wondrous kind  
Who was most rash  
With you to clash,  
Yet roused a joy I never thought to find.  
The sun at midday kills  
But ever fills  
With peace the morning and the evening wind.

## XXXII

From yours far different are my native shores ;  
 We toil not so incessant, look more kind,  
 In the long afternoon with neighbors joined  
 At friendly talk by wide plantation doors  
 We lounge at ease ; perhaps a jocund mind  
 Flings out a challenge and impromptu pours  
 A burst of song, whereon a newly coined  
 And quickly following answer victory scores.

I sing to you. Alas ! no answers come.  
 I sigh. Ah, woe ! your mockery wounds my soul.  
 I tell my love. But either you are dumb  
  
 Or stare at me as at a brain-sick fool.  
 I am a fool, not to have loved so true,  
 But to keep showing that I still love you.

## XXXIII

Gusts keen as steel that sweep the Mexique plains,  
 Remorseless heats that break the quivering ground,  
 Its life-juice never from a coarse plant drains  
 That hoards a cistern in its stem profound :  
 Beneath its bristly coat there never wanes  
 The store of liquid, crystal-clear and sound :  
 O love of mine, when I am gray and lean  
 Still shall my heart with love of you be green.

Perhaps while I am cold with rage  
Calling you cruel, rude and proud,  
You from a corner of the stage  
Observe me slyly in the crowd,  
Trying my actual self to gauge  
From out wild words and laughter loud ;  
You scorn me frivolous and groan  
For one who sees, knows you alone.

And so I am ; frivolity  
With me is like the breath of life ;  
Brooding is bad for them that see  
Poison, a bullet, the red knife ;  
So while itself the breast can free  
From loads of desperate sin and strife,  
Is it not fair to blind the reason  
And flutter one short blissful season ?

But then I have your portrait here,  
Not the mere lines that change and waver,  
But something deeper, far more dear,  
That part of you which fadeth never—  
Your mind, your soul, the essence clear  
Of your fresh harshness, all the savor  
And pure elixir of grace, to which  
Beauty is water from the ditch.

'Tis autumn. See, the silver-birch  
Leans tenderly through leaves of gold.  
So fresh and delicate ! no smirch  
Nor taint of that fair trunk is told ;

Most like it, angel forms the church  
 Drew to lure heathen tow'rd the fold—  
 A tree too fair for mortal eyes  
 But fit, like you, for Paradise.

## XXXIV

Can there be others, I reflect, like thee  
 Lonely and proud ?  
 Are the maids jostled by the careless crowd  
 Sad equally ?  
 Know they your pain of looking for a friend  
 In vain, though many to the post pretend ?

Then what avail self-chiding and contempt  
 If after all  
 None is so strong with look and conquering call  
 Thee to pre-empt ?  
 Why unto thee is not their love-song sung ?  
 Cold is their look, too ready is their tongue.

Men call thee fair, and quick of wit, and cold.  
 Yes, there it lies :  
 If they but near, how bird-like dost thou rise  
 Far from their hold !  
 Why art thou wroth when men or smile or frown ?  
 Why, than be touched, wouldest thou the rather drown ?

## XXXV

Yet see, the birch that's bodiced white and rare  
Holding a sky-blue parasol in place  
Above her robe embroidered all with lace  
Drives not the sun, her lover, to despair,  
For how, so fair, can she become unfair  
And blot the heaven that stands within her face  
With pouting clouds, or do her soul disgrace  
Through listlessness and pride's unseeing stare ?

The sweet wise shapely birch tree has for hate  
No room below her fragrant savory bark ;  
She murmurs early and she whispers late

Of lifelong friendship ; but when falls the spark  
That lights her death, she foots the flaming gate  
Glad as a Hindoo's widow toward the dark.

## XXXVI

How right it seemed my virago to find  
Among the band of sisters, cousins, brothers,  
And know that she can be as mild as kind,  
Supporting patiently the whims of others,  
And, to her personal comfort blind,  
Their fun applauds, their wrangling smothers.  
Through that rough rind which does her dear heart wrong  
Cropped forth the trait that I had loved, how long !

## xxxvii

I've called you hard as granite roots of hills ;

I've chid you void of female sympathies ;  
I've wept the cold observance of my ills ;

But, as the Pole that evermore will freeze  
Trembles at hint of summer from the South  
When suddenly puffs a warm and spring-like breeze,

So did I tremble when your firm-set mouth  
Softened to-day, your clear contemptuous eyes  
Grown deep and warm with O, what godlike routh !

Ay ; for a god must pity, not despise.

Ah, well I marked that great and marvellous change.  
It passed as o'er an ice-cold lake that lies

Far down in purple dale swift shadows range,  
When suddenly all from cold hard careless gay,  
Turns sombre, tender, melting, deep and strange . . .

So might a soul yearn for its robe of clay.

XXXVIII

They call you cold. Yet icicles  
Are frore and still there runs a rune  
Whereby one from their core compels  
The heat of noon.

Pure, golden-eyed ! . . . . A nation quaint  
Who worships her that hearts unlocks  
Carves with such golden eyes the saint  
From crystal blocks.

Fastidious ! . . . . But shall nobles give  
Their inmost thought to man and clown  
Who have no souls ? Enough, to live  
Without your frown.

Too wise ! . . . . The humble should be glad  
That subtly woven thoughts are read  
And weighed on scales of good and bad  
In that fair head.

But politic ! . . . . O childish race,  
Near betters restless, hating bars ;  
For ye, with angels face to face,  
Would flout the stars !

## XXXIX

Happy he who once has stood  
By a treasure of the wood ;  
While the radiance of his prize  
Rains on unbelieving eyes  
Lo, where he would lightly pass  
Laughs the stargrass in the grass !  
Stargrass gazes with an eye  
That heaven can conjure, hell defy ;  
With the straight and startled look  
Of the fawn that sips the brook ;  
With glances pure distilled and clear  
As angel-smile or Venus-tear :  
No flower of haughty gardens vies  
With stargrass fresh from Paradise.

## XL

Ah moments of a softer look,  
Ah hours that flew all unaware,  
Ah graceful skyswung hawks that took  
The eye with beauty's curve in air,  
Ah happy grass within our nook,  
Say, were you pressed by shape more rare ?  
Your voice that day, my own dear maid,  
Sang like the wind through a leafy glade.

XLI

Psyche the maid had heard of love nor knew  
Of love by sight. She slept beneath a tree.  
This laughed one night in blossoms, and there blew  
A breeze and strewed her from the breast to  
knee.

And whether love came up from earth or fell  
With shower of petals, who can say of lightning  
Which way it strikes ? There needed none to tell  
Psyche of love at Orient's earliest brightening.

Ah Nature, wide alembic, boundless main  
Of marvellous acts, what secrets can you show !  
Where all was rough and motionless—a rain  
Of gossamer blooms ! where love was not, you  
grow

Buds of sweet feeling, timid joys like petal  
Of tender gold ! For lo, my rods outcast  
Blow flowers in row as flies of Psyche settle  
And with mere wayside mud their saffron wings con-  
trast !

## XLII

I'm a worm at the feet of you, love,  
In the dust of the highway extended ;  
I lie mid the cinders and move  
Just enough to say life is not ended.  
You must come like a cool dash of rain,  
You must gather me lightly in leaves,  
You must nurse me through sickness and pain,  
While your palm a soft net for me weaves ;  
Then sweetened, refreshed and remade,  
When cast is my wrinkled disguise,  
On my pinions of sapphire and jade  
You shall float,  
You shall float through the land of surprise.

## XLIII

O loveliness of earth, O draughts delicious  
Of odors, airs and views !  
What buoyant sense of youth along the limbs  
With you beside me on the grass, capricious  
As the quick morning dews  
Which fly before the thrush has ceased his hymns,  
Before the eastern rims  
Of little ponds are gladdened by the sun !  
Starveling, what have I done—  
That one day brings these heaps of high delight  
And your face, glowing with a heavenly might ?

XLIV

Gray is the dawn, a spiteful wind  
Rattles the blind,  
Dull is the morn, but from the room  
Gone is the gloom,  
Sad is the day, yet O what light  
Bloomed here all night !

Sandal, myrrh and frankincense  
Their souls dispense,  
Eiderdown and Persic wrap  
My body lap,  
Harp and organ symphonies  
Outhymn the breeze.

For all night long I lay in trance  
And watched them dance,  
The lids and glances in whose eyes  
My future lies,  
The face that hides in smiles or tears  
What hopes, what fears !

XLV

Seldom falls her mute caress,  
Rarely come her smiles,  
Then it is that summers bless  
Hyperborean isles ;

For when she yields it seemeth so  
 Vivid tufts of heather show  
 Through the melting snow.

Who shall dare to call her stern,  
 Churlish or unfair ?  
 Lavas under glaciers burn  
 Hid from common air ;  
 For when she melts it comes to mind  
 Lovers hitherto were blind,  
 Loves were never kind.

## XLVI

Watch the curves of a flag shaken free,  
 The gait of a steed at a gallop,  
 The laugh of the dawn on the sea,  
 The pride of a high-bosomed shallop ;  
 Or think over joy-brimming days,  
 Mind the scent of the grape when it's blooming,  
 Or the booming  
 Of bees in the tall tasselled maize—  
 So rare, so delicious,  
 Warm, fragrant, capricious  
 The palm is of her that loves no man but me !

Think of gayety sound to the heart,  
 Of tenderness, pity for sorrow,  
 Of goodness not cloying but tart,  
 Of fear and yet faith for the morrow ;

Take deftness and candor and truth,  
With of wilfulness more than a scruple,  
Quadruple

The whole with a glorified youth—  
So winsome and sprightly,  
Forever delightful

The palm is of her that loves no man but me !

XLVII

Will she come to the trysting, my Indian girl,  
Girl of the rich dark face ?

Shall the dead leaves rise from the grave and whirl  
And warm themselves at her trace ?

Shall the maple boughs where crimson has been  
With her cheeks like sunsets blaze ?

’Twixt silvery birch and hemlock green  
Shall I fathom her deep true gaze ?

My Indian girl of the serious turn,  
Laughing but seldom, and then  
With a clear low laughter the pebbly burn  
Learns of the thrush in the glen . . .

Shall I see her ? The morning is gray with fog  
And down from the mist-wrapped hill  
A raven croaks, in the cloudy bog  
The deer lie breathless still.

But hist, a fox has sped through the grove,  
 Hushed are the partridge drums :  
 With her quick free step, her eyes all love,  
 My Indian, my conqueror comes.

## XLVIII

At last alone, alone where myriads throng,  
 Nor heed us, mighty caravanserais !

Alone to catch the song  
 That ocean sings and sighs  
 Where the long breaker lifts and bows farewell to sunlit  
 skies !

Delight to run like beachbirds barefoot down  
 The hard wet sand, and tear with childish glee  
 The ocean's foam-fringed gown,  
 And from the sad land flee  
 As lovers plunge from coral strands into the cool south  
 sea !

And side by side to cleave the waves asunder,  
 And dive like fish and meet in brief embrace  
 In the dim twilight under,  
 A strange immortal grace  
 Thrown on your form, as we were dead and meeting  
 face to face.

## XLIX

How came I here? Vault, pillar, groin,  
Tall windows deep with hues that join  
With sunset hues;  
The peace, the bowed heads in the pews,  
Ay, Latin words I used to use  
My lips recon!

Well, here I am. They stand bereft  
Of priest, the altar I was deft  
To serve of old,  
The spangles that I took for gold . . .  
Sweet awe, fair peace of lamb in fold  
Are ye still left?

Yes, here I sit. But see, a door  
Flies open, and across the floor  
And up the stair  
A crisp-haired boy! The blithesome air,  
The ease of him, the joyous care  
That once I wore!

Yes, there I move and to and fro,  
Saucy and handsome, whistling low  
To vex the priest,  
I wave my spark until increased  
From two to twenty at the least  
The tapers glow.

Image from out old memories caught,  
 What strange abstraction could have brought  
     Me to the scene ?  
 Perhaps all loving is of kin :  
 Has new with love that once has been  
     Alliance sought ?

My love for one has turned me mild  
 And changed me back till when, a child,  
     I worshipped God.  
 What miry ways since then I trod . . .  
 O stony paths I still must plod  
     My soul to asoil !

## L

What restful calm descends upon the man  
 Who knows his purpose ! From a mountain crest  
 O'er graven pathways, streams that gnaw the wold,  
 He smiles wide-eyed across the unfolded plain  
 Far tow'rd the glories on the outmost verge  
 Where hurrying Phœbus beckons from his car :  
 Yonder's the way ! Look, the untroubled goal !

That holy calm is mine, O double soul,  
 With me now knit in love beyond all jar—  
 Thee have I found, my hope in thee I merge ;  
 Warmed by thy breath no gale my heart shall drain ;

Soothed by thy palm I dare the dangerous wold,  
And while with rapture still expands my breast  
Clear through thine eyes rises the cosmic plan !

But thou mine own, the prospect calmly scan ;  
Fear not the future ; on my shoulder rest  
Thy smooth soft cheek ; then tenderly yet bold  
On this strong arm linking thy beauty's chain  
March forth with me through life's incessant surge,  
Nor faint though mists should haply blot a star,  
Though overhead the thunder-drum will roll.

Say not that all must be a happy whole  
Of light that shadows never dare to mar.  
With carols alternate the solemn dirge :  
Sweet mouth and eyes, O sweetest soul and brain,  
The earth hath metals wholer than gold.  
Be comforted, have faith, and make me blessed  
As Eve once loved and blessed the primal man.

## LI

Over the mountain beyond the gray cloud  
    'Tis blue, blue, blue,  
My love she is dainty, capricious and proud  
    But true, true, true.  
    Who can compel her ?  
    How shall I tell her

That I, only I, know her sweetness in full,  
 I who can quaff  
 The wine of her laugh  
 And love her the dearer for calling me dull ?

Over the ocean below the gray cloud  
 'Tis dark, dark, dark,  
 My love has allured me and nothing allowed  
 But cark, cark, cark.  
 How can I win her ?  
 O, I shall spin her  
 A song that will set her heart throbbing for me.  
 If once it shall melt  
 She soon will have felt  
 My own keeping time like the moon on the sea.

## LII

When thou art near me thou'rt so far away  
 The gulf that Lazarus viewed, what time the spirit  
 Of tortured Dives found a voice to clear it,  
 Seems a short gap compared with my dismay.  
 But when thou'rt gone, myself doth thee inherit,  
 I hardly know whose semblance I display :  
 Is't thou, or I ? It must be I, for nay  
 Is not upon its lips—and yet I fear it !

Am I two persons ? no, not fairly one.  
 A mote I am still beaten hither-thither,  
 An air-tossed leaf, a veering aimless feather,

A leafless tree, a thrush that cannot sing,  
A pile half-built, an eagle with one wing,  
A sea sans shore, a world without a sun.

Be thou my sun, and rise on every morn  
To find a worshipper like him who knows  
Darkness for months among the Polar snows  
And hurries, trembling, and with gloom outworn,  
To that high hill where first the pallor grows  
Before the blush of sunrise. Have no scorn  
Though we of thy sweet graces are forlorn,  
Nor hoard thy love. She lives who love bestows.

Yes, like the sun pour down a generous flood  
Of love unselfish, yes, though unrequited,  
Still be thou grand enough to stir the blood  
Of torpid women listening to thy name.  
So shall the man whose pleading thou hast slighted  
Kindle with reverence at thy noble name.

## LIII

I ask not if my dog be foul or fair  
So he be loving, nor that next my skin  
The nearest wrap shall be of Persian wear  
If warm it keep the ruddy room within.

Who says to fire: Spring you from cedarn cores ?  
To water: Were the skies you troubled blue ?  
To earth: Of old did weeds arise in you ?  
To airs: Blew ye from soft Sargasso shores ?

Then why should you draw parallels of praise  
'Twixt me and men, as though, were I far less,  
A fainter love or none my days would bless,  
Or each alone would foot our separate ways ?

Love not because of heart, or brain, or eye,  
But all and absolute, sans how, sans why.

## LIV

A borderland of glory lies  
Betwixt our waking and our sleep,  
There rocks precipitously rise,  
Prairies in awful grandeur sweep,  
There black is inkier than midnight,  
Whiteness is more than white.

From thither I but now am come,  
From walking in a fairy yard ;  
Mine ears still catch the golden hum  
Of wings that scatter myrrhs and nard,  
Mine eyes are ecstasied with gleams  
That shine too real for dreams.

Yes, you were there, more beautiful,  
If such may be, than now you are ;  
O, but my heart was bursting full  
Of thanks that sneer nor glance could mar ;  
Your face was strange ; I durst not tell  
Words that I knew how well !

The electric glamour of the scene,  
The sky, the heart-subduing hue  
Of vistas where the purplish green  
Of far-off seas annealed the view  
To one delicious perfect whole—  
They cured mine every dole.

Still, still there crept a spiteful thought  
About the wing-borne heart of bliss,  
Of days that other lessons taught,  
When all the fay's land seemed amiss,  
And you, ah changed ! were no more mine  
Than unchanged I was thine.

Which vision's true ? That borderland  
Lets nothing dull, unquickened be.  
Or fair or foul, each thought must stand  
Instinct with life, a slave, or free  
As bubbles rise along the storm—  
Hot, cold—but not lukewarm !

## LV

What would I give to pour my soul  
Out at the perfect gateway yours !  
Yet this is like the heavenly Pole  
And that the guide-star which endures  
The torment round and round to roll,  
Yearning to clasp the star that lures :  
Yet should the pole-star lightly choose  
To ask—the guide-star would refuse.

Look, as we ride the bushroad through  
The saucy branches strike your lips ;  
They ask not any leave of you  
As each across your red cheek slips ;  
And I, ah it is all too true,  
I envy every leaf that clips.  
But look you, I'm no bush, not even  
A satyr to insult your heaven.

Respect—ay, that's the little word  
Your sex must cry, but really they  
Want only that the sound be heard,  
And from their earliest conscious day  
They long to be by bold men stirred  
Out from a prudent stated way :  
Who takes them at their word's a fool,  
Will lose his suit or live a tool.

But I would rather lose my own  
Than desecrate her with a touch !  
When, a clear answering flame, you're blown  
My way, and eyes are lit with such  
Responsive light that you shall own  
Love has took wings and thrown his crutch ;  
Then, glorious woman, I'll be found  
The fieriest lover love e'er crowned.

Long since I would have made a stand,  
Abjured you quite, stopped every visit,  
Save that as often as I planned  
A manly course, one look exquisite,  
One sad long parting gaze unmanned  
My fixt resolve. Alas, what is it  
That shakes your heart ? Is pride the spell  
That fills you, deep and dangerous as hell ?

## LVI

How have you learned to tell the moment sure  
When I your harshness can no more endure ?  
For just as I have reached that dreadful goal  
The which a poet passing only stayed  
Until his hand a final sonnet made,  
Then slew himself and damned his simple soul,  
You turn so gentle, kind, delicious, warm,  
Dreamy and tender that the silly storm  
Slinks off abashed and I must hang my head—  
And yet no word of yielding have you said.

## LVII

The grinning menial at your door  
Enjoys, I know, my woful face.  
His sanctimonious cold grimace  
Makes the denial far more sore.

Hired to lie, he finds it sweet  
To cause a wretched lover pain  
And dares to show of his disdain  
A glimpse beneath the ancient cheat.

Like master, man. No figs are found  
On thistles. A responsive mind  
From sight of harsh and outer rind  
Judges the poorness of the ground.

And you, you rest within at ease  
Reading a novel languidly ;  
Perhaps you care enough to see  
A lover on your doorstep freeze.

But when you watch him stalk away,  
Striving to keep his features smart,  
Is there no voice within your heart  
That warns—he too may have his day ?

LVIII

Like should consort with like. The moth  
That stirs brown wings from weed to weed,  
Should he complain of slighted troth  
When gilded day-flies pay no heed ?

They live their season, brief but gay,  
Wise in their tribe. And so you're right,  
O woman with a face like day  
Still haunted by the thought of night,

For you a rich and leisured swain  
Should pass his years in plans to please . . .  
O day-fly, just is your disdain  
Whose home is in the tops of trees !

LIX

Could it be I whose gait is really lame ?  
How often storms and darksome days are harsh  
Because the spirit flounders in a marsh  
Of thoughts unruly bred of sin and shame !  
But the firm spirit, clean and void of blame,  
Finds no day hopeless, no storm undelightful,  
No bog of fronds and flowrets unquateful,  
Sees the good thing under the odious name.

What if the heart of this corporeal mesh,  
 This mesh whereof each fibre, drop of blood,  
 Yearns to you, grasps you—what if that had warning

How all the time the actual bearings stood ?  
 What if it felt the eternal sneer, the scorning  
 Of souls that wrestle hard with amorous flesh ?

## LX

Perhaps again it is your fault. Too free  
 With looks, you are too frugal with yourself ;  
 Born of a sordid race, you cannot see  
 The landscape save through glasses gilt with pelf.  
 Perhaps my nature knows that you have never  
 Advanced to meet it with true modesty :  
 Coyness ill-timed, a false and misplaced glee  
 Conjoin to damp our faith and life-ways sever.  
 Perhaps—perhaps . . . I can no more ; God send  
 The bolt that me and these vain rhymes shall end !

## LXI

Let me confess my folly here  
 As side by side we drive along  
 The woody road and bend to hear  
 The thrush's mellow even-song !

O many a time your name most dear  
Did I with words of insult wrong,  
Thinking it would my vengeance sate  
To use coarse epithets of hate.

But all was vain : I love you so  
That merely leaning thus, aware  
That you are you, fine tremors glow  
From feet to gently stirring hair.  
Careless your presence you bestow  
And give more joy than I can bear.  
Why, truly, should you grant such favor  
To me, lack lustre, void of savor ?

## LXII

Now when you speak I turn away  
My reeling vision from your face ;  
Delights too strong, too deep a play,  
Things too luxurious me enlace.  
With loveliness would you me slay ?  
Let me enjoy each separate grace  
And I shall thrive by high endeavor  
So bravely as to live forever.

And pass my days where I can hear  
Your voice, but never a word you're saying,  
That so, not overwhelmed by sheer  
Delight at sight of features playing,

I live with prudence year by year,  
 My stint of love with caution weighing—  
 Bah, I should break within an hour  
 My way to you through wall and tower !

## LXIII

Night, night, my joy conceal,  
 Go, go thou prying day,  
 Or lips that felt the seal  
 The sacred print betray.

The seal and royal stamp—  
 O passport to what treasure !  
 One swift, God-given pressure—  
 It shineth like a lamp.

Come night !—but ah, by night  
 I may not sleep for thinking,  
 Were day swung through, I might  
 Love's nectar now be drinking.

Stay day ! for I must brood  
 Deep folded in my mantle  
 On joys of love that scant all  
 The joys of thought, of food,

Of music, of ambition,  
 Of air and earth and sea ;  
 These reach not in addition  
 What some one gave to me.

LXIV

List :

Science folk have lit upon  
Many a neat invention,  
They can measure in the sun  
Heat rays in suspension,  
Draw an echo's curve  
And its length observe,  
Weigh a human nerve  
And the cell-pounds mention.

Whist :

Did they at cigar's tip note  
In their grave convention,  
Smoky cases Cupid wrote  
In a love-declension,  
Dotting down the throb  
Quiver, start and sob ?  
Perish all the mob  
Worthless Love's attention !

LXV

I care not if they think you fair, or you  
Think yourself fair, it makes no odds to me ;  
There's a quintessence far more rare to see  
Behind the eyes that now are brown, now blue ;

Some call your figure good: I do not know;  
'Tis well enough; but there's a little droop  
In sloping shoulders that doth charm me so,  
I am amazed all women do not stoop.

Is your foot small? I swear I cannot tell,  
I only see when that sweet frame's in motion  
An awkward grace, a billowy fall and swell  
As when a yacht bounds through the summering ocean.  
Wit was the beacon first my vision drew,  
But O, your goodness—as I gazed it grew.

## LXVI

When I enigmas of the world propound  
And ask of cloudlets floating light as air  
High o'er the murk what things they have in care,  
Or of the storm what happiness it found,  
Or question of its joy the low sea-sound;  
Then at the hour across my listening hair,  
Heard in the tempest, breathed o'er ocean's lair,  
Stealeth an answer from the skyey round:

Three ways I love you: first with all my soul  
That rays on yours like twin-stars void of fault;  
And next with mind that sways your reason's pole

As pairing hawks touch wing in heaven's vault;  
Lastly with body that would mix with yours  
As capes are clasped of seas while earth endures.

LXVII

Frail birds that feel too weak of wing  
To wander past the stormy sea  
To feathery backs will catch and cling  
But cheer their hosts with songs of glee.

So I to pinions of your faith  
Entrust my soul, nor doubt at all :  
O strong heart, bear me clear of scaith  
From windy blow, from watery fall.

LXVIII

Love me slowly, do not haste  
Lest the dye should quickly fade !  
Kiss with slow and savory taste,  
All the wonder fairly weighed.

What if hurry bring disdain,  
Love too ardent make you loth,  
Sugared phrases cloy your brain,  
Fervent thinking jade your troth ?

Hate me, rather, now and then,  
Frown against me like the night,  
I will brave the moment's pain  
For the later long delight.

Love me deeply, mellow, slow,  
All your life in mine compressed,  
So our bodies one shall grow  
And our bones together rest.

## LXIX

Ere the rain was really there,  
    Silent maid,  
Did you feel a touch of care  
    Like to fingers laid  
    Gently on your hair,  
Shadows o'er your spirits fall and thrills your breast in-  
    vade ?

Treetops in a sudden qualm  
    Shake and pause,  
Wavelets leap though winds are calm,  
    Clouds of golden gauze  
    Whirl though still a balm  
As of airs of Paradise enfolds the fields and shaws.

Day-flies, beasts or wild or tame,  
    Birds of song  
Restless grow, ay, blooms that flame  
    All the roads along  
    Feel at heart the same . . .  
Can the sadness of great gladness agitate the throng ?

Ere your face is really there,  
    Silent maid,  
I know one o'er whom despair  
    Shakes his coward blade,  
    Feeling Gorgons crouch and stare  
Through his soul and lives in pain until his eyes are  
    laid

On the large-lid velvet eyes . . .  
    O, the rest  
Of your voice, and O, the prize  
    In your look confessed . . .  
    O, earth's gladness, as she lies  
Listening to the rain that falls in music on her breast !

## LXX

Rest deep and living steeps and warms and folds  
This wayward soul, when at the last we cling  
Shoulder to shoulder, when the vast bat's wing  
Of night, unfurling from the east, withholds  
Sight of the sun, burying his greens and golds  
So deep the hope fails that the morn will bring  
The monarch back ;—ah, though you call me king  
My confidence bears stamp of other moulds.

My creed is that I love you, and whate'er  
You did or do, indifferent, good or bad,  
Weighs not upon my balances a hair

Nor shall it make me for a moment sad.  
One and yet two—O, what a mystery's there  
To wake the dullest, make the gloomiest glad !

O restless throng, massed on the shovel prow  
That eats the moonlit reaches of the river,  
Ye feel them too, those mysteries that quiver  
Through deeps of tenderness on high, below,  
Shooting in stars, glancing through eyes that glow  
Yellow, red, green among the barks, and shiver  
The North with splendors from a boundless giver  
And seam the dark with lamps that come and go.

For hushed are hoof-stamp, babble and the sharp  
Jangle of bells, and songs uncouth are still ;  
O'erhead resounds the vast Æolian harp

Built for the god of storms by human will,  
The Bridge—whose twin colossi with their warp  
Frame for the dawn's white feet a curving sill.

Behold the dawn, like you white robed and young  
Whose kiss divine has made me too a god  
Fed with ambrosia such as earthly clod  
Ne'er perfected, but an essential wrung  
From flowers intangible that long have sprung  
In human hearts, nor tasting of the sod  
But of that field by mortal passions trod  
Where kindness blooms beyond the scope of tongue.

Your kiss is cool and seems an icy arrow  
To push regretfully my bosom through,  
Yet lurks behind it warmth as of the marrow

Of soft-furred things—ah, like the dawn are you  
Cool-fingered one ! and see, through cloudy barrow  
Heaped to entomb the sun that hero stalk in view !

## LXXI

Yes, I'm turned musician, with your favor !  
Clumsy fingers ripple like the grass,  
Eyes that read not crotchet, clef or quaver  
Lightly down the page fantastic pass.

I, who could not tune a foolish zither,  
Pour a choir of music organ-toned ;  
Lovely sounds are darting hither-thither,  
Harmony o'er discord sits enthroned.

Ask me not the miracle that wrought it  
Else you be a lover most discreet !  
Stoop your ear ; I whisper how I caught it  
In one lesson all too briefly sweet.

Fancy me two-bodied in the gloaming,  
From my arms bud other, tender twain,  
From my knees two feet, O shapely ! roaming  
On the pedal lay their velvet strain.

Keep my secret. Thus I turned musician,  
 Felt a glorious anguish sweep my heart  
 While two souls in heavenly-glad contrition  
 Took with heavenly choristers their part.

## LXXII

The mind of man, how lonely, weak and proud !  
 Nor comrade lightly nor is peer allowed ;  
 Boastful, self-centred, by its proper aid  
 Fain to exist from swaddling band to shroud !

Who was that old philosopher who bade  
 His thought push wings and circle unafraid  
 Down to the first of things, the runes to read  
 Of men and women ere that sex was made ?

Man then was woman ; woman, man ; the meed  
 Of selfish coldness was to life decreed,  
 Wrapped in their double nature, in their womb  
 Each bare the offspring of his private seed.

So may we erst within the spirit's home  
 Have formed one soul, whose halves, O joyful doom,  
 Though parted long by forces past our ken  
 With songs remembrant face to face have come.

The fixéd stars not always fixt remain  
But burst in satellites with paths in chain,  
Another aeon, and those wand'lers turn  
To meet and passionate to embrace again.

So we are met, and if too warm I burn,  
It is that souls are weary that adjourn  
Their bliss so long, that, sad and incomplete,  
To merge themselves together they must yearn.

## LXXXIII

Forgive, forgive the barbarous desert chief  
That so assailed the glories of your shrine,  
Scaled the fair walls that hedged the fane divine  
And roughly entered where beyond belief  
Lovely and godlike, fresh as new May-wine,  
Virginal as Diana in relief  
Against a Grecian frieze, that form of thine  
Awed the bold robber to a shame fast thief!

It was my ignorance, goddess wise and kind,  
That brought me here, but now for grace I kneel  
Before your altars with a contrite spirit;

I needs must joy that boldness made me blind,  
O, mark my brow with that delicious seal,  
And grant I may your champion's place inherit!

## LXXIV

I never loved before, so tell me, lover,  
If I am treading love's old pathway over  
All lovers trod? When foils were swiftly whirring  
And through your veins the hot red blood was stirring  
Did the faint-grown but always biding image  
Of true love brighter grow as warmed the scrimmage,  
And while the bygone lost chivalric spirit  
Could for a space its antique sway inherit  
Did she to your exalted mind appear  
Still wiser, wittier, still more fair and dear?

## LXXV

Within my heart all forms of love  
Have met and kissed you lip and brow.  
At first my love began to rove  
Chaste as a sister's pulses flow.

Next like a doting uncle's care  
My warm affection you waylaid;  
Soon, father-like, I stood to stare  
Upon my glad and winsome maid.

Ah then! ask torrents why they fell,  
Demand of hurricanes the cause  
That zephyrs suddenly will swell  
To gales that break the bound of laws.

There was no brother in my heart,  
No loyal comrade pressed your hand,  
A while I took the foeman's part  
For madness touched me with his wand.

But lo ! the storm is broke. I yearn  
With mother's, father's, husband's love,  
Deep as the sea that holds no burn,  
High as the stars that never move.

## LXXVI

Even as the birds that haunt our twilight sky  
With sickle wings flecked twice in shapes of moon  
Through sheets of rain their flight undaunted ply  
Brave in a strength that comes they know not why,  
Nor at the lightning bolt will blench or swoon,

And as through deeper night they carve their way,  
By faith upborne upon their pinions fine,  
So have I learned even to the morning's gray  
On love's pyed wings my heavy heart to stay  
Pilloved on gales that blow from realms divine.

## LXXVII

Cool blows the wind, it cannot rob  
My lips of warmth upon them sealed ;  
And bright the stars, they do not throb  
Like glances erst to me revealed ;

And clouds are smooth, but O, the clear  
 Expanse of bosom half descried !  
 And dear, white gentians, but more dear  
 The arms where curves and dimples hide.

To find a friend, what miracle is harder ?  
 But if she meet you half-way in your ardor !

The half-moon dreams, she does not swim  
 Like eyes that half with passion close.  
 The owlet nestles on the limb  
 No softer than two cheeks of rose.  
 Luscious are nectarines they say  
 The Far West bears, I know a mouth  
 That sweeter tastes, is fresh alway,  
 That warms the north and cools the south.

Say, do you know how long we've been asunder ?  
 An hour—a day—or twenty months, I wonder ?

## LXXVIII

A moist warm air so tense and still  
 The creak of oarlock mounts the hill ;  
 The moon, a lamp a star-flame holding ;  
 A violet moondog both enfolding ;

Nor cricket's chirp, nor bay of dog,  
Nor shout, nor blast through stealing fog ;  
In long lines brooding trees that pray  
Or seem to grope a blinding way—  
Hark, how ethereal yearns and grieves  
The owlet, here before the leaves !

O disembodied voice, O shade,  
O harp Æolian sweetly made  
In part of moonbeam, part of mist  
By fingers of Aurora kissed,  
Against the black pearl of the sky  
Invisible you softly fly  
And to the March night moan of wrong,  
How day detests you and your song,  
How birds are foes and spring deceives—  
Poor owlet, here before the leaves !

The damp from earth my body chills  
And through my thought your quavering thrills  
A terror vague. The spectral sky—  
The trees uncanny—and that cry . . .  
I know all now : the phrases made—  
The grave—and who therein is laid . . .  
'Tis my voice cracks the stony charm ;  
'Tis my soul mourning haste and harm !  
O spring that smiles and omens weaves,  
Am I not come before the leaves ?

## LXXIX

What have I done to feel the fiend despair,  
Black as the jaws of overhanging storm ?

In vain I reason, his abhorrent stare

On me is bent and all the pulses warm  
Freeze, and my lips mutter a useless prayer.

Ay, 'tis the hour when scornful memories swarm  
Within the mind and jeer my very ruing  
Since what I did not I would now be doing.

For friendship is a trust. Then what have I  
To show for that most precious gem I borrowed ?  
The star that fell to me from eastern sky

Was held most dear ; I joyed with it and sorrowed.  
But was that all ? Does she more wisely ply

Her brain or body ? Is her soul-field furrowed  
Deeper to hold a rich and sacred grain ?  
Through me does she more kind or wise remain ?

O that some profit stand to my account  
When doomsday breaks and every hour is weighed,  
Some trifling gain, that yet shall be a fount  
Perpetual to my glory ; so the maid  
Have risen thereby one grade of wisdom's mount,  
Have plucked one flower of them that never fade !  
Alas, I rave ! That perfect one, that prize  
As well of children's love as of the old and wise !

How deck the rainbow, how upon the sea  
Pour lovelier colors, how improve the look  
Of one whose tact and girlish modesty  
May not be spoke nor writ within a book ?  
Pure, noble, proudly blooming, frank and free !  
So oft for her my wits their hearth forsook  
Within her gardens waywardly to roam  
That in her absence still were they from home.

## LXXX

When we are touched by wrinkled age  
Your bosom, now ineffable  
As God's most pure, unwritten page,  
No longer glorious in swell,  
War on the ravished eyes will wage  
Nor still of other beauties tell.  
Your lips will pinch, your neck turn sallow,  
Your eyesight fail and cheeks grow hollow.

Then shall I triumph, then those lips  
I'll press with bliss by so much clearer  
As from your frame the beauty slips  
And to your eyes the soul is nearer.  
Thus have you seen of seaworn ships  
Crumbled in wreck the lifelong steerer  
Feel for the hulk more love and pride  
Than e'er for yachts that brave the tide.

## LXXXI

What fiend accurst, what fateful string awry  
Jars the soft music of your atmosphere ?

What would they here  
Frowns, shrugs and silences and looks that tie  
Tongue to the throat ?  
What phrases float  
Unshaped and yet with evil portents in their  
note ?

The sweetest lute has hours of discord vain,  
The fairest forehead is not always clear,

Nor surely steer  
Pilots for aye across the uncertain main.  
Are pilots then at fault  
Or billows fierce and salt  
That all is wreck beneath an unclouded vault ?

At times your presence seems to hold a poison  
That frets my soul. I know not why the cheer

Of life should disappear  
And noisome damps trouble the clear horizon.  
Half false, half real they seem  
Like spectres in a dream ;  
I swim in vain up an unending stream.

LXXXII

More names than one are writ upon my heart,  
More names than one  
To me are dear and form of life a part—  
And yet the list shall want the name wherewith it was  
begun.

After the death my restless heart embalm,  
After the death—  
And scan it well as palmists read a palm,  
Then certify how oft of love each fateful wrinkle saith.

Right through the heart a smooth keen razor bear,  
Right through the heart—  
Look and be silent. What is written there  
Formed of my life and soul on earth the only genuine  
part.

LXXXIII

When long in rapture thy twin rose I press  
I ask myself within that joyful daze,  
Can falsehood harbor with such earnestness,  
Can drafts of bliss that two winged souls amaze  
Be followed by a surfeit of the spirit ?  
Then am I bold and wise, then am I sure  
Untruth can only come to them that fear it  
And foul suspicion haunt a mind impure.

No, such an one as thou much more than seemest ;  
A woman so frank, so loving, truthful, just,  
With soul so weighed betwixt the schooled and free—

Small man, in her more truth lies than thou dreamest ;  
In her deep bosom thou shalt moor thy trust  
As slumbering fishers trust the fruitful sea.

## LXXXIV

Hard by a lake of azure near a hill  
Stands a vast building of the middle ages.  
Pinnacle, arch and curious gargoyle fill

With patterns intricate the several stages  
And mock aloud against the thoughtful grace  
That bloomed from stone in Hellas, lit the pages

Of classic bards ; and as the Gothic race,  
Despite the chaos in its written lore,  
Shook from its pens the trammels that oppress

Loftiest of thinkers, so the turrets soar  
Through barbarous and unrestricted wealth  
Of grovelling forms, up where the free winds pour

By flumes unseen the glorious wine of health,  
Where clean are snow and rain, and all the mesh  
Of vapors creeping from the town by stealth

Through the sharp thunderbolt is rendered fresh . . .

To you I speak, woman, that long hast stood  
A fair cathedral present in the flesh,

Refuge of arts, garden of thoughts that bud,

Fruitful amongst a waste of spectres lean,  
Ruddy, though mixed with masks devoid of blood,

Singular, proud and rugged, full of spleen

And yet whose head o'ertops the highest cloud,  
Ay, comrade of the bright celestial queen

When fast earth sleeps, when stars ring clear and loud !

#### LXXXV

There lurks a deadly beauty in the air ;

Down the long wedge of street the fronts are  
gray

With silvery grayness rich and warm and rare.

Mark, in the shadows ! there is that to-day

Of liquid loveliness outpoured on all

That gilds the landscape with an immortal ray

And makes the driest factory-roof and wall

Palettes whereon the subtlest colors play.

I know such visions, ah, too well ; they mean

That woful storm shall mar to-morrow's face ;

That once again the gods have envious been,

And what they loved to raise will now debase ;  
That nothing lasts ; that such unearthly sheen  
Is but the sleuthhound's music on the trace.

## LXXXVI

Last night by chance one little word,  
A word of gall, a word that bit . . .  
No harm had come had I not heard  
For naught was meant by it.

But rankles on like poison sown  
The baleful word, the word accurst ;  
It raised a devil of its own  
On flame and acid nursed.

It will not off. Within my mind  
It withers on like vampire bird  
Or hellborn goblin fast inshrined :  
God !—Why say just that word ?

## LXXXVII

If you depart from our demented town  
I know not what this wretched mind will do,  
For it supports each posing social clown,  
Each pitiful snob of the grand-lady crew,

Because not yet their venomous clack may drown  
The tower of loveliness that soars in you,  
Without whom in this labyrinthine prison  
The sun's extinct—life has no reason.

## LXXXVIII

While the leaves and the dust-clouds are whirling  
What has come to the dreams of my girl ?  
Is the strand of your secrets unfurling  
As the sea-fog unravels a curl ?

Now alas for the thoughts that were brooding  
Hid away in the shades of your heart,  
For ambition too early excluding  
Every fair thing in love by its art !

Shall you go like the sky-fondled gentian  
Hunted down by a hope that's a doom ?  
Over year there is never a mention  
Of the flower on the hill of its bloom

But it grows far away from the mountain  
Where of dew in the morning it drank  
And its leafage is drenched by a fountain  
Where the soil is too rich and too rank ;

Let it wax, the poor show ! let it tower  
 Till the folk think its splendor has come :  
 It is dead. For the dark azure flower  
 Will not blossom away from its home.

## LXXXIX

Leave me not single-handed to the fight  
 With morbid thoughts, bestial demoniac dreams,  
 Lest ocean be no bar to haunting screams  
 Wailed o'er the brine from my forsaken spright,  
 Lest, when you smile upon a gladsome sight,  
 Sun turn a portent of enjaundiced beams  
 And as with blurs the sickly eyeball teems  
 Your vision plunge into a wan twilight.

Ay, think, dear child, how you are all untried  
 In shocks the tempter wreathes in verdant leaves  
 As Bacchanals would hide the edge of spears ;

Think ere you dare to brave the all-changing tide  
 How joy to come like fairy-gold deceives  
 But love that lives daunts the remorseless years.

## XC

While uncertain I adored you  
 Who so pressing, who so kind ?  
 Once enmeshed, my love has bored you,  
 Elsewhere turns your mind.

Tell me, scorner, what is catching  
More than treason, more than scorn ?  
There may be surprises hatching  
For a maid forlorn !

## XCI

Then go—and find a gentler tongue than mine  
But none more true !  
Go, and across a thousand leagues of brine  
At moments rue  
The lot of one whose lamp has ceased to shine,  
Whose sun was you.

Go, for the world of sugared speech is full,  
But you must pay  
In some queer coin. It ever was the rule  
And sure world's way  
To tear with briers from wilful lambs the wool  
When sure the prey.

Go, to be wise and travelled and betrayed ;  
But though you roam  
From Spain to China, though you be waylaid,  
Robbed of your home,  
Ruined, defaced and shamed—be undismayed ;  
Come to me, come !

Come, not to find me glorying in your plight  
 But that I prove  
 Weight in the words that you esteem so light,  
 So I may move  
 Your cynic soul to feel and judge aright  
 My stainless love.

## XCII

Go, it must be. But O that I had force  
 All good I own into your veins to drain !  
 May it not serve if on your brow I strain  
 My utmost will ? Straight to the scheming brain  
 Is there for my thought's anguish, then, no sure and  
 psychic course ?

Turn your round ear. Thus the sweet gate I touch  
 Where nobly were my speeches entertained.  
 O earlet pink, hereby art thou maintained  
 Deaf and fast-barred against the unrestrained  
 Poison of those false-innocents daubed with corruption's  
 smutch !

And eyes unsated still with worldly pomp,  
 For aye ye thus are bound by love's fine spell !  
 Turn, turn aside from what ye would not tell  
 To those at home, or for a moment dwell  
 Indignant on them as on thieves breaks out by night a  
 lamp.

And O, red mouth, over thy rose I yearn  
With love past speech. Thou most perfected bloom  
Of womanhood, be secret as the tomb,  
In thy sweet garden let these find no room,  
Words that are ugly or unfair, words that will sting or  
burn !

White breast whereon my tears of parting fall,  
If in thy palace shadow of baseness lurk,  
Thus do I lay my ban as holy clerk  
Taught from on high upon the trace of murk  
And for the queen, thy stately soul, hallow and purge  
the hall !

## XCIII

O car of gold, upwheeled by crystal steeds  
From rough horizons of a city roof,  
O golden car, mark how the steamship speeds  
A weaver's shuttle through the ocean's woof  
Of wave and current like a thing from man and beast  
aloof !

Black and unhalting, how it cleaves the surge,  
Throbs though it lives not and yet lives in motion,  
Though zephyrs music make, or though the dirge  
Of gathering tempest wail across the ocean,  
Onward the black projectile flies in soulless rapt devo-  
tion.

O watch-tower moon, tell me if some one props  
 Her head on hand and stares upon your face !  
 See'st thou aboard a maiden who o'ertops  
 All maidens with a rare and sovereign grace,  
 Sits she in dream, or to and fro wanders with restless  
 pace ?

Ah moon, gold moon, that see'st and hear'st as well,  
 Can'st thou no word upon her lips define ?  
 Hath she confided to thy witching spell  
 The name she loves ? Answer by love's great sign  
 Thy bended bow, sweet moon, and say the name she  
 breathes is mine !

## XCIV

Autumn draws ruddy toward its close  
 And soon beneath the coal-black branches  
 Winter, the polar snow-bear, shows  
 His ivory teeth ; upon his haunches  
 Hurries the hoyden Spring, a rose  
 After the coward beast she launches . . .  
 And then comes June, alas, sans you !  
 How can I live the summer through ?

'Tis best to die in tender Spring  
 For then birds, flowers, the air, the earth  
 With hopes delicious burgeon, ring,  
 Smile, light with inarticulate mirth

While horrible Time beneath his wing  
Conceals the lie that lurks in birth . . .  
Suppose you loved me, O my sun,  
I'd still find sunspots, though I won.

Fruition—what is that but death ?  
Desire's the only aim for men ;  
On earth no thing that draws a breath,  
Nor plant, nor bird of hill or fen,  
Nor crystal of the rock but saith  
A truth whose fulness clogs the pen—  
In growth alone we hope retain ;  
Follow, still follow ; never gain !

They prate of rationalistic schools,  
The harm they do a vulgar age . . .  
Can priestly or can atheist rules  
Recarve a line on history's page ?  
Can man with all his pygmy tools  
War on the woods of the actual wage ?  
Darwin or Leo, right or wrong,  
Each man must wail the same old song.

## XCV

Wreathed ah how wondrously of snow  
The garlands white and purple-shaded  
Which liberal gifts of air bestow !  
But what of garlands mired below—  
Of waste of sympathy, of woe  
That somehow sympathy evaded ?

And see the tints behind the glass  
 That dye this moon-moth's fragile wing,  
 Then ponder, marvel o'er the mass  
 Of moths as fine that by the crass  
 Neglect of nature like the grass  
 Perished, nor found the one grand thing—

The mate with whom, divinely mad,  
 To speed the sweetbrier copses through,  
 About the sweet-bay swamp to gad  
 And lovingly, in moonbeams clad,  
 Inhale the fragrant lotus-pad,  
 A shadow to its body true !

Neglect? But is it negligence  
 This waste of nature everywhere ?  
 What ears, what eyes are ours ? Which sense  
 Is full, then—perfect and intense—  
 Which is it ? O the deep, the dense  
 Conceit of man ! O quick despair !

These insects, birds and little things  
 That feed on moon-moths, are not they  
 Fair in their manner ? Shall their wings  
 Lack lustre while the moon-moth flings  
 By thousands forth ? Must rings in rings  
 Break that one tribe shall have its way ?

Regard a mustard-seed, uphold  
Its bulk against life's hearth and haunt  
Enormous sun. When inward rolled  
Are thoughts as infinite of mould  
As Nature throws you, cease to scold :  
Not Nature, you are ignorant.

XCVI

With languid look the gentleman of ease  
Strolls to his club, the car-horse pants, and black  
Have grown the flags with shopmen who like bees  
Swarm from the basement of yon iron stack  
And pour two ways ; the starveling urban trees  
Are etched amazing on a heavenly soil  
Whose tender greenness jars and yet agrees  
Mysteriously with all the city roil.

It is the hour when wistfulness the mind  
Invades as shadows climb the roofs above,  
It is the hour when in the heart a sigh

Loosening its wing will whisper, not unkind,  
A pensive word : Dearer than woman's love  
Is yonder sunset fading in the sky !

## XCVII

Am I a traitor, then ? The west at times  
So tender grows, so infinitely fair,  
Methinks no mortal should be aim for rhymes  
Since the sky beckons far more jewel-rare.

The tulip tree in early Spring that opes  
Fresh green broad hands, the wondrous lines and hues  
Of landscape where the ravished vision gropes  
From broad to fine, from near to deeper views—

A gush of song, a passage in a book,  
That tear the soul with a tumultuous throb  
Am I a traitor to prefer to look  
On them, and her of rightful incense rob ?

Unjust is he that would delight alone ;  
Ah that with her my every joy had share !  
But fate has frowned, and so with secret moan  
I live my life and seem too light for care.

LOUIS BARNAVAL

*PART II*



I

SUNNY city, pleasant-faced,  
Town of thrift and town of waste,  
Down whose shining thoroughfares  
    Lovely ugly dames and men  
    Gayly jostle ; grain and tares ;  
    Hearth of virtues, yet a den ;  
    Home of horrors, haunt of taste !

Surely from your glowing skies  
Falter influences wise—  
Skies of turquoise, mauve and rose,  
    Emerald down the westering way  
When the king of life repose  
    Seeks in crimson down, and gray  
Moons in purple spaces rise.

Merely living in delight  
On a day so rich, so bright.  
Off, thou spectre of a hurt !  
    Every passer is a friend  
    And each woman, I assert,  
    Is a lady whom attend  
Courteous heroes, mild in might.

## II

How desolate the sumptuous manse  
 Which you, my lost one, lately haunted !  
 It is a visage whence the glance  
 Of joy, the cheeks where color flaunted,  
 Becks, frowns, lovelooks and looks askance  
 Have gone as withers gold enchanted :  
 When all are gay and laugh within  
 I only see the death's-head grin.

## III

Gone is my treasure, but not to her grave,  
 Vanished and lost with a frown as farewell ;  
 They who o'erweeningly happiness crave  
 Often of misery tell.

Where is the dew of the damask-rose mouth ?  
 Where the locks fragrant as squawberry blossom,  
 Where the rich hand like a fruit of the south,  
 Where the cool spice-laden bosom ?

Where are the limbs like to trees rounded fair ?  
 Where, the soft billows that swim with her gait ?  
 Where, the smooth back, the high insteps that bear  
 Loveliness onward in state ?

Misery, spare me this prize from your talons,  
Wretchedness, come not the truthless one near,  
Down to her side, O luck, with the balance,  
Sorrow, dry quickly her tear !

Slipped from the view like the sheen of the iris,  
Melted sheer off as a cloud from sun's wheel,  
Maiden, may falsehood consuming its virus  
Spare you the anguish I feel !

## IV

Since I was left a prey to loneliness,  
Contempt, self-torture ; since without redress  
Are harms by me and by my dearest done,  
A thought of thoughts my every vein has won,  
And, gazing eastward o'er the waves that bloom  
Like fields of flowers that change from light to gloom,  
From paley rose to incarnadine or black  
As blossoms near the forest-fire's track,  
Now purple, now so vernal-fresh in sheen  
The painter dares not imitate its green,

I am resolved no longer to abide  
A butt for worldlings, nor behold the tide  
With hideous sloth engulf the dreary strand,  
Pause and return and leave me to this land.  
If die I must, to my too early fate  
Let me be borne magnificent in state

Yet always nearing, since this world of chance  
Is not all trade but has its own romance,  
That one I love! Behold; I built me staunch  
A barque ill-starred upon the sea to launch,

A yacht with keel of platinum and sides  
Of fragrant cedar which the axe divides  
On frosty mornings in the upland woods,  
Its ribs of copper chiselled o'er with hoods  
Of inland gentians near the sweet seas growing,  
Its deck of silver, dug where foam is flowing  
Through dizzy cliffs of lilac stone, of rose,  
Of hues no man the tale and tally knows,  
And bulwarks gold, from hills whose kernel man  
Has searched where streams before the deluge ran.

A boat of state, a yacht that is a bier:  
The tapering mast of redwood straight I rear;  
At foot, of ironwood a dais dark;  
The yards are birch-trees young and white of bark.  
My sails in warp are cobweb and in woof  
The down from thistles; of my dais roof  
The thatch is sweetgrass pinned with cactus thorn;  
My ropes, the creepers by the cedar borne,  
And there among the water's troubled yeast  
Like a chained osprey fronts the prow the East.

Eyes opaline from bows that steeply sheer  
Gaze toward the sky line where the dawns appear

And high upborne above the wild wave shock  
A figure carved from crystal of the rock  
All lucent, save for one malignant cloud  
Within the bosom where the heart beats loud.  
The hawser parts, the stem devours the wave,  
The western winds about the sternpost rave,  
Full blow the sails, and, longing for the fray,  
For the high seas my bark has quit the bay.

Whither? I have at mast-foot lain me down  
Careless at last however fate shall frown.  
The tiller blocked, the sheets made fast, the land  
Falls in the west; death holds me in his hand.  
Come storm or calm, I shall not reck a whit,  
In Arctic seas shall feel no trembling fit.  
The sun may burn, the whirlwind round me  
rave,  
Well shall I know to keep a visage grave—  
One chance alone! if her hand touch my head  
Mine eyes shall open though my soul be fled.

## V

What gladness you convey by touch of hand  
Can not be spoke, can not be thought;  
This world of mortals is too gross a land  
That therewithal should earthly tongues be fraught.

Whose purity is like the peaks of snow  
Untrod, unknown, a whiteness felt,  
Yet seen as silvery-blue by those below  
Who live and breathe because the snows will melt.

If we should part and pass to separate ways  
With stifled sigh, averted head,  
Within a land where centuries are as days  
Our love shall live though flesh and wrong lie dead.

## VI

Would that I might on eagle's wing arise  
Upborne in spirals to the outmost skies  
Where earth a bossy globe far inward lies  
Whence godlike eyes

Lit by the beams that ever roll through space  
May catch through thousand leagues of air the trace,  
The quick effulgence, the untutored grace  
Of one lost face—

Then, with the swiftness of the lightning's flare,  
Would I might hurl me through resistant air  
And touch, O chastely, ere it were aware,  
A bosom bare—

My lips all trembling with respect, desire,  
Anguish, awe, worship—love that haunts the mire,  
Love that is watchword in the heavenly choir,  
    Love that is fire !

And with such lambent, clarifying glow  
Press that the bosom like fine wax should grow,  
The sweet frame melt in fragrant cloud, and so  
    Upward should flow

To steep my veins and heart and inmost bone,  
For miseries long, for thirsty droughts atone,  
That so my soul should lie no more alone  
    Sick, blind, o'erthrown !

## VII

Lamp of my path  
    And beacon to my footsteps faint,  
Guide in the dark, refreshment to endeavor,  
This love for you strange byways hath  
    Untrod by saint  
Yet most delicious and of heavenly savor ;  
The graver's subtle tool  
Must fail to cut and penman fairly write  
The hidden ways whereby I used your light.

Not by one rule

Did I absorb your loveliness  
Or come to meet your wide unconscious gaze,  
When most I played the fool.

You did not guess  
That then I basked most hot within your rays,  
That I was there to drain  
Long opiate drafts that raised me, for the spell,  
To a ridge of fame from out a living hell.

When you would strain

Apart your glorious lids in scorn,  
Yet was there one whom sneering could not touch,  
For then was this dull brain  
With such bliss torn  
As never yet did opium-eaters clutch ;  
All, all your wealth  
Served only to augment the wicked measure  
Of fierce, untrammelled, rich, narcotic pleasure !

## VIII

Yellow and amberhued pink white gold-red  
Roses for one pulled who at last came not,  
Roses, your perfumes to the dustiest spot,  
Each cobweb of my attic now are sped  
And soothe me with a fond reproach when all complaints are said.

Droop the head, beauties, ah, and rain your leaves  
Along the bare and sunrift-powdered floor !  
Though death be nigh, could ye have blossomed  
more ?

Did ye not waste beneath my humble eaves  
As much, to you, as all the West's innumerable sheaves ?

Generous, celestial, rainbow-tinctured souls,  
Too great to murmur at your slender fate,  
Would you were fixed in firm and gorgeous state  
On convent walls where daily upward rolls  
To heaven the incense for that queen whose meekness  
heaven controls !

Roses, I am so lonely in the waste !  
And ye too pass, and sunsets flit and fade ;  
The birds are going ; music dies while made  
And every noble thing away must haste :  
I linger here and think on one henceforth forlorn, dis-  
graced.

Why should man seem so noble—and not be ?  
Why from his heart shed forth a perfume rare  
That only seems to embalm the troubled air ;  
Why talk so true, why be so fair to see,  
Why wrap about him snakeskin robes rank with hypo-  
crisy ?

Roses, farewell ! I would not keep you here  
To linger longer in a tradesman's world ;  
In vain to those your wonders are unfurled  
Who hold the high thing cheap, the base thing dear.  
The cry is gold ! Your priceless charms will only raise  
a sneer.

## IX

Migrant bird of the mighty wing  
Whither away ?  
To the East, to the isle of eternal spring  
Where the crags are rosy-gray.

Would'st fly, wee bird, with your shred of song  
Thither away ?  
Ay, broad wings, for a rose I long  
That is sweeter than loads of hay.

Could I but mount on your brawny vans,  
Whither away  
Should we go save thither where meet the clans  
Of the hawk and the sea-osprey ?

Then mount, O bird, like a wingéd heart !  
Thither away,  
How we cleave the cloud and evade the dart  
Of the rainbolt ! Hear them say

Down below : ' O bird of the wide strong wing,  
Whither away ?

What music you make ! Who taught you to sing ?'  
' It was Love. I'm his angel to-day.'

## x

A battle royal from the first, dear heart ;  
Hardly we met, before the waspish foils  
Were crossed and clashed :  
Thrust and riposte, advance, retreat, tierce, quarte,  
The vigorous sixte, the octave full of wiles,  
Coupés that flashed  
And fiercely o'er the other's rapier dashed !  
As if our hate were worse than mortal foes,  
And any woes  
Were better than a flowery day of peace.  
When did we cease  
With sterile fights that only left us sore  
To waste the hours of joy that come no more ?

Love should be blind and I the lover  
Who only knows the starry blaze  
Which kindles in your look, O glorious woman !  
What fate is mine that I discover  
Motes in the clearest moony rays  
And clay in features that are more than human !  
Can I the courage summon

To say, I do not love aright ?  
O, you are all a man should dream,  
But I, alas, 'tis I who teem  
With vices, faults, with pride and spite—  
As fit to raise to you these eyes  
As grovelling moles to scale the eternal skies !

## XI

I called you barbarous but whose  
Barbarity is worse than mine  
That with a shameless brow abuse  
A woman with that look divine,  
One whose rare tender humor woos  
Like perfumes from long-treasured wine ?  
For who am I to dare to chasten  
You with a voice shrill, snarling, brazen ?

Perhaps we both are barbarous lovers  
In rough new lands, of kindred rude,  
And ours, O curséd race, discovers  
Too late that love however crude  
O'er its own nest with kindness hovers,  
Attacks the foe, but not its brood.  
No matter. You may still awaken  
To-morrow morn a maid forsaken !

For I can leave you, in the flesh,  
While loving on. You doubt? Then, sever  
For good and all, O silken mesh  
That held me fast! No wits are clever  
Enough that thread to knit afresh.  
Lo, as I write, you're lost forever!  
My hand is firm, I do not frown.  
Bah! must a tear come trickling down?

## XII

From strong old France my forefathers  
Adventured forth to Florida—  
Poor men, rich souls. And yet how raw  
Are they in whom a metal stirs  
Reason from truth and law!

Tell us, Cathayans full of guile,  
Whence came the rings and armlets thick?  
Hide not the place. Make answer quick,  
Or, by our swords, your cringing smile  
Shall fade beneath the stick!

Then rose in answer tales of old,  
How Eldorado, close inbound  
With jungles void of life or sound,  
With quagmires, mountains, held the gold  
Like brown dirt in the ground.

And then—why tell how brave men died  
Slowly, by twos, beneath the glare  
Of deserts, poisoned by the air,  
Strange waters, arrows? Far and wide  
No land of gold was there.

So did I venture from my home  
Sport of a like ancestral craze,  
And saw, O charms that fiercely blaze,  
My sad love's Eldorado bloom  
Behind your savage ways.

## XIII

Why should I not confess me? This fair morn  
Your outlines farther from my bosom stand  
Than figures Turner painted to adorn  
Vast distances in some Saturnian land.  
Is it a fairy goddess trips the strand  
Or does she print a hoof-mark? Or, forlorn,  
Stalks a mere woman of clay all clad in scorn  
Who stares on seas unknown with tight-clenched hands?

Who can respond? I only know, your face  
Is blotted out from memory's latter pages  
With hardly a perfume of you left behind.

Love is quite dead. Hatred no longer rages,  
But insolent pity, who affects the kind,  
Smooths all the past with hollow commonplace.

## XIV

When to Peru the Spaniards came  
Bigots and full of lowborn scorn,  
Poor Indians hailed them with the name  
Of sons of the Sun, made haste to adorn  
With gems their foes. Did I the same?  
Once, but no more! My bonds are torn  
And I prefer the mountains cold  
To you, your jarrings and your gold.

Peter of Candia was a Cretan brave  
The best of all Pizarro's brutal crew  
Who all alone, his starving friends to save,  
Marched on a strange walled city of Peru.  
Though armed at point, he bore the stave  
Whereon Christ died. The Indians flew  
Against the stranger, bore him down,  
Dragged him in fetters to the town.

Peter of Candia was prepared to die  
When to a den of jaguars he was passed,  
Then out he flashed his good sword from his thigh,  
Rejoiced to breathe in glorious fight his last.  
But lo, approaching to the jaguars' nigh,  
Themselves the captive beasts before him cast!  
Like him I too resee the air above  
Saved from the tigerish kindness of your love.

## XV

'Twas dark when Spanish hypocrites  
With Colon gladly cast their lots ;  
Nor recked his gay or spleenful fits  
But used him for their plots.

A motley crush of thieves and priests,  
He sailed them west, he sailed them south  
Brawling and horning like to beasts,  
Up to a river's mouth.

Hell in the bark ; a Paradise  
The island where by sickle shore  
Golden from groves Elysian rise  
Temple and palace hoar.

So forth they speed, the good, the bad,  
Vicious and wise, to stretch their limbs !  
For wine or jewels some are mad ;  
All race to sate their whims.

Who cares, though Colon sternly charge  
'Stray not ! one hour is all allowed' ?  
They range away like goats at large  
Laughing at word so proud.

And few are wise. The rattlesnake  
Has poisoned one; another, ta'en  
At violence, for a damsel's sake  
By jealous hand is slain.

A third has found within the brook  
Great store of gems; with odds and ends  
He loads his cloak; his friends forsook,  
Slow toward the shore he wends.

A fourth hews down a stately tree  
To seize on twigs that shine like gold,  
A fifth ascends the fane with glee  
To filch him wealth untold.

A trumpet, hark! The ended hour!  
Sweet hour, departed all so soon!  
We stay, swear these! One fruit, one flower  
Cry.others as they run!

The anchor's up, the cock-boat brings  
The last who e'er return at all.  
How the ship rocks, how sharply stings  
The harsh claw of the squall!

The earliest come have seized the best,  
The later, fagged with haste and toil,  
Stand shivering, each protruding vest  
Swelled with a varied spoil.

And now, behold, the gems are dross,  
 And soon the flowers are foul indeed !  
 The fruits rot fast and sailors toss  
 All forth lest sickness breed.

And as he sails the bushy beard  
 Of Colon wears a bitter smile :  
 To fair new lands what have I steered ?  
 Greed, force, and hate, and guile !

## XVI

As with word-weary eyes my twilight room  
 I quit, from off the outlook vast are seen  
 Sheets of broad dusk, each but a windy screen  
 Of the world-mill that ceaseless, gloom on gloom,  
 Falls and time is. And so the spectres loom  
 Of ill-spent days, blotting the traces green  
 Of hope from out my soul, and making mean  
 Lofty ideals, thoughts of our life and doom.

My slow-raised past I now would be undoing,  
 The struggle long, the faithfulness I rue,  
 Chiding myself a fool to dream of suing,

A greater fool an unkind heart to sue :  
 Poor loser in a race not worth pursuing  
 Where is the spot in you I find is true ?

XVII

When first he ravaged the Peruvian lands  
Pizarro, chief and torturer of his peers,  
Imbibed through greedy all-believing ears  
Tales of the golden and the silvery strands,

Tales of a nation boastful by the waters  
Where streams like seas meet in a mightier flood,  
Tales of the women who their flesh and blood  
Spare not, but give each infant son to slaughter.

Greed saw it rise, the glittering high-faned town  
Far in the wood wastes, and desire, the shining  
Of golden cornices, the gems entwining  
Locks that the feathers of the warbird crown.

Thirsted for them the gross Pizarro spirit :  
' Set on, O comrades, at the last we know,  
Where fitly love lurks under woman's blow  
In warrior wives who warrior souls inherit !

' These lovely Amazons whom Indians fear  
Our conquest be ! From their strong loins compelling  
Our sons, we shall all Indian imps rebelling  
Master for aye, and a vast kingdom rear ! '

A Barnaval with many a comrade clashes  
Sword on his helm. Alas for firm set wills !  
Alas for tangles of Madeira's hills !  
The parrot screams above their moldering ashes.

## XVIII

Your name ! The great and close-crammed sheet  
That pours its flood of news abroad  
Before the sun has left his seat  
Below the waves, that sheet abhorred  
By poets and by dreamers drowned  
In fantasies from fairy ground . . .

Your name ! In fine type lost and merged,  
Nor blazoned forth, nor broadly placed  
Among the news all night that surged  
O'er vast plateaus, that sang and raced  
Beneath the salt seas . . . Yet mine eye  
Found it as homing doves will fly.

Your name ! My God, what is't to me  
If you be here, or there, or yon ?  
Between us lies infinity  
Of cold and insult ; done is done ;  
Now, for that smile I used to prize  
I would not deign to raise mine eyes.

XIX

To all returned but one, to all  
Your friends of childhood and of youth—  
When the black portals of your hall  
About you opened bare uncouth,  
A thought was yours for great and small,  
On me alone you had no ruth ;  
Yet will I stake my hopes on high  
The one real friend you have is I.

Should I to western wildness fly  
Or dull my pain on distant oceans ?  
Forget your loveliness and try  
To heal the old with new emotions ?  
I could not if I would and I  
Disdain such poor and coward notions.  
No, I shall brave it out and stay—  
See you, if need be, day by day.

Though crawling horror, agony  
And death in life shall be my part  
Against myself I here decree  
The slow doom of a shrivelling heart,  
And though the world be blind or see  
No scream shall come, no sweat shall start,  
So that at last you too believe  
That I have long, long ceased to grieve.

Yet, as the workman in the shop  
 Where phosphorus lies absorbs the same  
 And through his body, drop by drop,  
 His blood bears on that dormant flame  
 Until he dies and surgeons chop  
 And analyze his shattered frame,  
 So, were the microscopes but true,  
 Each fibre of me would tell of you.

## XX

Dear girl ! Heart's blood ! . . . Alas, forgive me,  
 sweet,  
 Such foolish and familiar words of thee !  
 For like wild birds that 'gainst the barriers beat,  
 So do my random thoughts dash desperately  
 Against the facts that my young blossoms cheat.  
 Wrapped in a dream, I seem your face to see  
 As with warm love it glows on me and yearns :  
 I tread the air ; my foot the star-field spurns.

## XXI

My dreams are amber clouds,  
 A rolling vapor shrouds  
 The shapes of town, of river and of land ;  
 Bent to the brain's fine gale  
 Vast outlines wax and pale  
 As gods at feast recumbent loom upon a haunted  
 strand.

Starshine and cries of earth,  
Visions, and sounds of dearth,  
Outspoken luxuries and whispered thrifths  
Have melted off as chaff  
When the glad winnowers laugh  
Under the sun in amber clouds across the horizon  
drifts.

All thoughts unlarge and low  
The breezes from me blow,  
Mighty, colossal are the forms that stay,  
As he who stems the air  
That eagles find too rare  
Sees but the seagirt land below, notes neither reef  
nor spray.

Lo, my own true love's land !  
The white gull is her hand,  
Behold her brow, behold the radiant eyes  
Of Rocky Mountain lakes  
No storm of passion shakes,  
Before whose deep the new-come dawn trembles with  
new surprise !

## XXII

Love that is deep, love that is clear  
From self and stain is mine  
And therefore, now that the tree-tops sleep  
Over the listening hill, I keep

Watch in the broad moonshine :  
 My tryst is held for one most dear ;  
 She'll not be here !

Moon on the wane, mirror of gold,  
 Love like to mine is rare,  
 And therefore when in your oblong pane  
 My lady yearns I know her again  
 Through a million leagues of air :  
 She turns a head of princely mould  
 And charms the wold.

Love of my head, love of my soul,  
 I am yours to my dark-red heart,  
 And therefore gazing aloft I fain  
 Were sure those eyes of yours remain  
 On me and never depart :  
 'Tis wise, ay me ! one's love to dole,  
 Not give the whole . . .

## XXIII

Did you but guess how terribly alone  
 I wander on through life  
 While seeming happy in a host of friends,  
 You in my eyes would read the voiceless groan  
 And hear through sneers the strife  
 That ceaselessly my firm resolving rends  
 And ever blends  
 Gall with the savor of a small success.

Wherethrough perhaps you would be made more tender  
Than now you are. Perhaps the truth would gender  
A flood of healing tears for my distress,  
Perhaps you might caress  
Once, as a sacred rite, this feverish head  
Before I go to join the untroubled dead.

XXIV

Long fasts can I maintain without one vision  
Of those great eyes of you. But then there comes  
A day when upward the old leaven foams  
When, lest the worst befall, I make decision  
To see your face. In some thick crowd I stand  
And watch you pass, moving without suspicion  
That he is nigh the buds of whose ambition  
Lie crushed and dead beneath a careless hand.  
As the poor opium-smoker must renew  
His darling vice, so must I turn to you.

XXV

Rush of light feet and dreamy swirl of robes,  
Music that falls as evenly as the beat  
Of wave on sand, a golden-dusted air  
That mellows strangely the incessant stare  
Of half a hundred flames in crusted globes—  
Soft panting throats, flushes on faces sweet—

One is not here and yet's in midmost dance,  
 Sad under smiles and farthest when her art  
 Has made you think her near as she is dear !  
 One woman makes a counterfeit of cheer,  
 For, in that calm abstracted underglance,  
 Do you not see she always plays a part ?

The players dream and dancers one by one  
 Slip weary forth. I see her eyeballs gleam  
 Straight into mine. They know me, but, alas,  
 Hardily looking elsewhere, on they pass  
 And I am here. The pleasure all is done.  
 'Tis ebb. I drift with refuse down the stream.

## XXVI

Because you do not love me why should sun  
 Stare dismally ? The sparrows chirp and brawl ;  
 Their courses wild things, flowers and seasons run,  
 And I, like them, sleep when the day is done.

Because you do not love me all the learning  
 Got and to be got seems on me to pall ;  
 None buys therewith a fragment of love's yearning  
 When once the elf-gold into dross is turning.

Because you do not love me, in the night  
 I waken cold and toss the empty bed,  
 Question the past that did to me despite,  
 Or else to you, since love has lost his might.

Because you do not love me how one loathes

One's self and sees a poor contemptible wight  
Who has no skill but his vain longing clothes  
In foolish acts, looks, words, and simple oaths !

Because you do not love me, all inside

Is dark, as lacking of your heavenly grace,  
And all outside me deepens with a tide  
Of black and life no longer opens wide.

Because you do not love me I must stand

From you aside and ape the careless face . . .  
O, smile of Circé ; O, her touch of wand ! . . .  
For though I sink you will not reach a hand.

XXVII

How with new hope does dawn the jaded fill,  
Its white light laughing in each gloomy corner !  
How do the heavy eyelids of the mourner  
Turn to the East and with new ardor thrill  
To see each smoke, an airy hearthsprung warner  
Of advent day, pointing its feathery quill  
Across the white page of the morning still  
One way, and that where sleeps my love, my scorner !

But at high noon they elsewhere veer in token  
That she is harsh and wants not me at all ;  
Soon are they gone and at their flight lies broken

The false glass hope ; but in the twilight's pall  
 Between my teeth the selfish words are spoken :  
 May never sun rekiss this earthly ball !

## XXVIII

In the dun dawn the street unfurls  
 Its length of snake, its human coil,  
 And through the fog come shivering girls  
 From humble beds to shops of toil  
 Starting the feverish eddying whirls  
 That grow till the ways at midday boil :  
 Now must I think how softly lies  
 Your comely head with curtained eyes.

Your yielding arms and firm white breast  
 Budged and bloomed in wealth and ease.  
 And yet—have not they too much rest ?  
 Some day, will you not envy these  
 Poor hurrying work-girls meanly dressed  
 Who learn perforce the arts to please ?  
 Will you not rave and blame your stars ?  
 Alas, 'twas you held up the bars !

Grant love a contest. Is it worse  
 Than slow sad years of lonely pride  
 When quick unmaiden freaks reverse  
 Your haughty state, whereat you hide

A humbled face, your rashness curse,  
Longing you had in girlhood died?  
For, dream at will unsound romances,  
At length you'll come to make the advances.

XXIX

Sun, hail to thee, since thou with myriad hands  
Hast flung asunder on the horizon chill  
Of dreary night the sooty marble bands  
Unstinted gold upon the town to spill,  
The gloomy town-plain where like beacon stands  
Seen but of me, lonely, and wan, and still,  
The shrine and casket of as fair a form  
As ever raised in man an amorous storm.

Sun, be my friend, and through her chamber pane  
Speed like an angel to the nest of bliss,  
Nor knock, nor ask, but ere that she complain  
Print on her brow, O heavenly proxy, this!  
Be bold, fear not, though you her visage stain  
With glows unwonted! What she takes amiss  
Charge to my care, but stamp within her eyes  
A face she knew not always to despise.

Perchance it will remind her of a day  
When birds were drunk with happiness and sang  
With open beak and pulsing throat to May  
Their ecstasy till earth and heaven rang;

Perchance she will remember, with dismay,  
 The flowers of friendship that in April sprang  
 Were left to waste, uncared for, unperceived  
 Or else of strength by cruel blasts bereaved.

Ah that a moment I were in your place  
 And like a thought could reach her lips in bow,  
 Stammer thereon the litany of grace,  
 Forgive, ask pardon, and about her throw  
 The arms of love and my warm form efface  
 Upon her bosom, till with mighty flow  
 Of sympathetic currents cast aside  
 Were all the barriers that two souls divide !

## XXX

What were your thoughts when up the aisle  
 You swept, attendant on a bride ?  
 Were you not haunted by a smile  
 Such as you shot the day I tried  
 You with a wedding-march beguile ?  
 You smiled ; and hope lay down and died.  
 Nor, when the solemn words were said  
 Did one regret traverse your humbled head ?

## XXXI

Two gentle women, fair and choicely dressed,  
 Who listen to a sad and tender song.  
 Half real and half affected, from their breast  
 Heaves the slow sigh and to their eyelids throng

The traitor tears ; these two might have confessed

Regret for men who, being constant long,  
At last, disdainful, cast aside the chain  
And left them to fastidiousness and pain.

Dear hypocrites, like all your sisters sweet,

You would, yet would not ; loved, yet did not care ;  
Your only aim : the man before your feet ;

Your acts : all such as drive men to despair,  
And though the hours, months, years were terribly fleet

You lived as thoughtless as the birds of air.

Dear hypocrites, pray God you never quaff  
That weed of naked truth which makes me laugh.

It is no boast to say, young wives exist

Within this sinful and unwholesome town  
Who will not struggle if discreetly kissed,

Who straight to hell can lead men gayly down.

With the most charming shall I keep a tryst

And your disdain in lust and luxury drown ?  
Never. I now at least can think of you,  
Which, were I base, I should not dare to do.

I will not say that no alluring eyes,

No ruddy lips and prurient draperies

Have made my pulse leap ; passions still must rise,

And I am man, and loathe hypocrisies.

Of you I think as hyssop, as some wise

Cleansing elixir from corruption frees

Corporeal man. For as my lone years lengthen

Thoughts of your pureness my whole being strengthen.

## XXXII

What is it—this involved and tortured life ?  
What does the maze amount to in the end ?  
We eat, sleep, dream ; we gabble, fight and trade,  
At last to gain—what ? Some unusual good ?  
Foolish ! When we with bubbles all are done  
What but an empty sadness is our lot ?

The huckster saves and buys of land a lot  
Thinking his happiness secure for life  
Because his top endeavor has been done ;  
Hardly well-housed, and lo, the fancied end  
Moves to a farther station ; life's not good  
Until he mounts the next rung in his trade.

So, won is lost, whatever be his trade.  
Now since we cannot like the wife of Lot  
Forever anchored seek our private good,  
Where shall we find what makes us bear with life ?  
How shall we fashion, that our sure-paced end  
Smile in glad memory of good actions done ?

Only if we have loved is life well done  
For love alone is antidote to trade,  
True love, which hallows a seeming-selfish end,  
Nerves nerve, and smooths a fellow-mortal's lot ;  
True love is death to egoism ; 'tis life,  
The only life, grace, truth and sovereign good.

XXXIII

O thousand lamps of a gigantic town  
Can ye not, one of you, reveal one trace ?  
Till I am gray must I pace up and down  
And never light upon her glorious face ?  
Never see fluttering her bewitchful gown,  
Yet often catch within a gaslit space  
At hide and seek behind a mimic frown  
Lovelooks that dance like butterflies in chase ?

Or else with far-off, dazzled gaze I stare  
In at the window of a rolling coach  
And hope to find her pictured there on black ;

Of lovely women see a host approach,  
Pass like to meteors in a splendid glare  
But not once quaver, Ha ! come back ! come back !

XXXIV

I caught my breath on entering the room :  
You sat there in the old familiar place  
As once, a lovely twilight shape, the gloom  
Twice golden through the rareness of your hair and  
face.

With a loud cry I rush to clasp the knees  
    So firm, round, smooth ! Alas, to thinnest air  
Dissolve the lines that only moved to please :  
    My fool's brow strikes against your empty chair !

## xxxv

Among the clouds all night the windy sieves  
Scattered the town with winter's hoary dust,  
All night my dreams were filled with no distrust  
You were not she who for my joyance lives.  
All night we wandered, hand in faithful hand,  
Along a shore as yet unspoiled by greed  
Where none were listeners but the whispery reed  
And love rose aromatic from the land.

Thereon comes what awakening ! One grave sheet  
Of cold implacable white about me drawn  
Whereon of their lifework a thousand feet

Some record soon shall print from place to place :  
O hideous page on which the heartless dawn  
Finds not between our doors one loving trace !

Her face is gone, but through the sash looks down  
A square of blue sky lawned in fleecy cloud  
And as I gaze, how exquisite and proud,  
How winsome, intimate upon the town

I

As autumn leaves fly up in gusts of air  
With rabid haste and know not where they go,  
Thus do my aimless thoughts at random fare  
Shrivelled and torn and strewn in wreck below  
By love too hot and hatred keen as snow ;  
Each whim ascends an unseen spiral stair  
That leads nowhither, hovers, and then in slow  
Confused gyrations drops to a hopeless lair.

Like them, alas, I have outlived my day.  
There is no future but a slow extinction,  
No haven left but an unnumbered grave ;

Yet would I could before I die distinction  
Confer on her who rapt all hope away !  
I cannot name her and her honor save.

II

Dust on the ways, dust in the air, fine dust  
Upon this page and on my quill, the ash  
Of hopes outburned and slag and gritty clash  
Within a mind where slowly, slowly rust

With a loud cry I rush to clasp the knees  
So firm, round, smooth ! Alas, to thinnest air  
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Upon this page and on my quill, the ash  
Of hopes outburned and slag and gritty clash  
Within a mind where slowly, slowly rust

Ribs of the ill-starr'd barques that shall not thrust  
 A prow of iron through life's wave, nor flash  
 A way to fame, nor take wide ocean's crash—  
 The inward man dry as the outward crust.

What, all so dark ? Nay, for a tendril tender  
 Can break hard soils where mighty heats have been.  
 Far off I see the petals fine that render

Life fresh once more, when from her leaflets green  
 The bellwort tolls a note of modest splendor,  
 Toil, dust and heat are but her foil and screen.

## III

Great God ! These toads that still infest her way  
 Huddle in holes and beastly propagate ;  
 Anon, when Luna marches forth in state,  
 Majestic, amorous of departing day,  
 And shows the world that love is no disgrace—  
 Out crawl these toads and blubber in her face !

## IV

Ah, in this greenwood still the Indian pipe  
 Grows white and strange, the thrushes liquid sing  
 And deadly nightshades nod their berries ripe  
 And round the knoll the forest giants spring  
 Fencing with leafy slats our glade and bower  
 And o'er the rock their golden shadows fling.

It was just here I had you in my power  
Yet would not touch the curl upon your brow  
Ere you should give to me the pallid flower  
Upon your breast. Ah, wilful beauty, how  
Could I with rude hand seize the bliss withheld,  
How act the brute when you would not allow ?

The Indian pipe which in my hand I held  
Turned slowly black ; the while it drooped I knew  
It stood in sign of loss. Then I rebelled :  
From out my tortured heart the anguish drew  
A bitter deadly speech. Alas, alas,  
That pygmy word such giant harm can do !

In thought full oft that chequered day I pass,  
Once more I feel your firm warm hand in mine,  
Smell once again the odor of sweet grass  
Mixed with your breath and hear the harper pine  
Soothe my fierce longings to a gentler passion . . .  
But then, but then returns the fatal sign

Of love withheld, and scorn, and churlish fashion !  
With the old fury all my body burns,  
Despair but feeds my rage with double ration,  
And, while I'm hating, every muscle yearns  
To strain you in my arms as on that day  
Toward which a jaded mind incessant turns  
I would have clasped you had I had my way.

## V

Yes, there are days brim-full of lavish gain  
Though careless feet have brought one to their sill,  
Yes, days there are when suns of joyance fill  
With solid gold each shadowy court of Spain,  
And, trickled o'er by smooth wide wavering chain  
Of godlike music, how the firm-turfed will  
Melts and relents until the emotions rill  
And run like water through the dry-dust brain !

Ah, yes, to-day, when all the world was ears,  
What found me foolish, who yestreen was wise ?  
What drink was quaffed in madness through mine eyes ?

Through lanes of chance-turned foreheads who appears  
With tender line of cheek, a graceful guise  
And low white brow my smile might wet with tears ?

## VI

You've prayed for me ! O gratitude, that I  
Should foist my baseness on your lofty spirit !  
My name ascend from your great heart on high !  
My welfare with your own assail the sky  
That by itself had never dared to near it !

It is too much to ask you, darling child,  
    Mix not your soul's wine with my brackish water,  
Enough, that often view of you beguiled  
My thoughts to good, and that your glance, when mild,  
    Banned the rough devil of despite and slaughter.

The scentless flower that startles, as we roam  
    The April woods, with azure cup and slender  
Exquisite stalk, exhales about one's home  
Rarest of perfumes; so your fancies come  
    In low-voiced phrases fragrant, true and tender.

## VII

The spot, the month, the day, the hour!  
    Have you espied when fates are kind,  
In glades where dayflies dance, a flower  
    Made to your mind?

And old friend, new. To-day, not blind,  
    Standing before the misconstrued  
You see all true from moss-entwined  
    Clean root and stalk

Down the green sheaths that graceful bend  
    To tendrils that could almost walk  
But only toward the sun can trend—  
    See, see the bold

Black-bearded stamens rise and gaze  
 Upon the pistil's fairy gold,  
 And with the silk-soft petal rays  
 Tremble and bow !

Behold how all is perfect made !

That flower unfragrant, fragrant now,  
 Perfumes with sighs the listening glade,  
 And lifts, a maiden from her bath, a sparkling dew-  
 gemmed brow !

### VIII

Amber mist  
 Lightly kissed  
 By the sun of May capricious,  
 Yellow haze  
 In the maze  
 Leafy of the trees delicious.  
 Down the street  
 Glimpses fleet  
 Of a gull-wing'd yacht in motion,  
 Up the sky  
 Wild geese cry  
 As they near the northern ocean.

Like a vail  
 Smoky-pale  
 Cloudlets tinge the far horizon,

Fairies paint  
Hills with quaint  
Mimicry of autumn's foison.  
Moist, at ease,  
Chant their glees  
Timid toad and salamander,  
Puffs of health  
Blow by stealth,  
All things to a love-tryst pander.

In my room  
Hornets hum  
Rousing from their wintry slumber,  
Through the woods  
Violet buds  
Deck with blue the fallen lumber.  
What surprise !  
Violet eyes  
Live and flash a dry heart under,  
Once all sad  
Now all glad  
I can only gaze and wonder.

## IX

Grieve not. The mullein of the crannied wall  
Is not as brave and straight,  
Flaunting, at ease, magnificently tall  
As many a roadside mate,

Yet crowns the stone with a far lovelier hood ;  
On smitten stocks grow pears of dainty flavor  
And wounded maples liquid sweets exude,  
Eagles are all the braver  
Though the mean whining lead have lamed their wing ;  
Deeds of great manhood spring  
From snubs of fortune, and the shaken brain  
Most strangely will attain  
To feats undreamt though blows have sought its death  
with might and main.

## x

You must not gaze too fondly, friend, on me :  
A thirsty wood may seem what it is not  
And landscapes cool and verdury may be hot  
And gape for showers too fierce for amity.  
We are but friends, not brethren, no, nor kindred,  
Yet in my veins rise the tumultuous meres  
Of likes and longings that may fright your soul  
Or cause an ache that wisdom might have hindered.

Move me not much, nor let your music roll  
Its cool-warm serpent folds about mine ears ;  
Be unaware, if sometimes, when you gaze  
Deep in my eyes, I start awestruck, ashamed,  
And, muttering lame excuses feebly framed,  
Rush from your presence in an angry maze.

I am your friend, but you, O innocent,  
Know not, such looks are for a husband meant.

XI

Ah, from the brow of this transcendent hill  
When we are lost before the ocean's face  
And both our spirits ride on billowy space  
Where linger then the law and human will ?  
Are we not one ? are we not more than friends  
When earth is not, nor even the sea can harm ?  
Is there a human rule can thrust its arm  
Between us two when each to other tends ?

Forgive me, you that smile, bear with my worst ;  
I sometimes rave ; at times the hard words, good,  
Bad, honor, treachery are as though immerst

In one bright bath of color. In which mood  
I know not truth, the stable rocks are seas,  
Waves are rough stones, I walk upon the breeze.

XII

Strain out my life and see how little sweet  
Is mingled with the harsh !  
Strain my life out, and see how few the grains  
Of radiant metal your sad pryings greet !  
My life-course is a marsh

Wherein some deftly hidden gem remains  
Clear of all stains  
But lost like thoughts yet dormant in a mind.  
Be not too kind  
Lest through such heat I faint, nor yet umbrageous  
Lest the dark frown and shadow prove contagious;

But meet me clad all in a tender-lined  
Sad robe of neutral grays  
And let my wild nerves slumber to a tune  
Of whispers like the low-voiced fragrant wind  
That through a trellis plays  
Among white lilac buds a loving croon,  
A soothing chord, a boon  
Of sensate music where no word is framed  
And naught is named  
But where celestial rapture sinks to swell  
Through breast, through heart, through every brainy  
cell.

## XIII

Compared with one as upright strong and fine  
As the wood hollyhocks that ne'er incline  
Their stately stems but grow as grows the pine

I am so base, so wicked, mean and coarse,  
It is a marvel conscience leaves me force  
To play the groom when you would mount your horse;

The small broad foot when in my hand I feel  
And the gloved fingers to my shoulder steal,  
I blush, and at your springy weight I reel.

You know not this, for have you not averred  
As groom I am to other men preferred  
Since like a boulder I have stood, nor stirred ?

Just so, belovéd, you shall never know  
How base I am, how coarse and far below  
Your heights of cruel but unblemished snow.

Believe me all you think me—good and true,  
Tender, forgiving, never hating you . . .  
No storm beats here, all, all is deep June blue !

Thus have you fixed a standard for my aim  
Unreachable, even as the wise men claim  
A curve exists, that, like a tongue of flame

Which comes and burns not, ever curving near  
Nearer, more near, so marvellous can steer,  
It comes and comes, yet never strikes the sphere

XIV

What is it ranks the seeming careless files  
Of white on blue against the dark vault of heaven ?  
What sows with freedom yet with grace most even  
The brown trees through the landscape, ay, what piles

The snow in subtle lines and adds a leaven  
 Of hidden order to the ocean's isles ?  
 How comes it that with flowers the meadow smiles  
 And symmetry is found in star-groups seven ?

Ask that and answer it by asking this :  
 Unerring as the lark that splits the blue  
 What power guides the steps of lovers true

One way to meet in overwhelming bliss ?  
 Why through the veins of twain are currents whirled  
 Symmetrical, akin with all the world ?

## XV

Or was't the grove of pines that clothe the hill  
 Or laughing lakes that gem the middle vale  
 Or those high piles of foam-clouds that are still  
 As ships the gods along the nadir sail ?  
 Was't yellow blooms that all the meadows fill  
 Or shadows chasing over wood and pond  
 That found me on a sudden all too fond  
 And brought me her to be my good and ill ?

No, none of these, it was the mad south wind,  
 The wind is she who soothes, dissolves and warms,  
 That foots, a queen, with noiseless spicy feet

My breast and brews a hush of tropic storms :  
 These still must seek to flash with smothered heat  
 In love's true lightnings, clean and fiercely kind.

XVI

By separate trails and parallel  
How sad to stroll and know not why,  
With here and there a glimpse of sky,  
Each loiters darkling through his dell !

Lofty the banks and thick the hedge,  
Bright fern and flower on either hand—  
At last, be witness, sea and land !  
Two find themselves with wings afledge

Where, mouth by mouth, each separate lane  
Juts like a trumpet from the steep . . .  
O meeting strange and dewy-deep !  
So drop weds drop along the pane.

XVII

O thought of woe, that in her chamber mured  
My friend refound must hide her radiant eyes !  
Ah woe, that on her slender temple lies  
A frozen compress and it was endured  
Her malady should otherwise be cured  
Than through my lips and cold hands brimmed with ice,  
That other ears drank in her piteous sighs  
And other tones their sympathy assured !

But if I may not lay your pillows true,  
Nor rack my busy brain in your behoof,  
O woman of the slender aspen's form,

Still, time a thousand marvels can perform :  
This, writ by moon's light only, stands in proof,  
Mine eyes henceforth shall spend their strength for you.

## XVIII

The pomp of lights, the pride and mighty round  
Of ladies gay against their escort sombre,  
The babble of tongues forever heard and drowned  
In glorious music endless as the number  
Of angels in the glory of the sun . . . .

Heads turned my way and little hands to press  
And teasing talk and looks of no, consenting,  
Then from the stage the storm and quivering stress  
Of Gretchen crazed and Faust in vain repenting . . .  
Ah, then the hardest-hearted breast is won !

But gone is opera, gone the rows of heads,  
Gone music, singers. For I see a chamber  
With pretty things and one divine who beds  
Herself with grief. Thought, thought, where wilt  
thou clamber ?

Take all—songs, dames, and sights and sounds in bil-  
low—  
All, all, to smoothe one tossed and tear-stained pillow !

XIX

Demons and ghouls that ravage hapless lands  
On states disjointed pour like desert sands  
And lassitude and faintness, aches and pains  
Rise when the part without its comrade stands.

O oneness of the sphere that was divided,  
A goal thou art by purblind souls derided;  
Prate on of free-will, bargains, goods and chattels;  
Long, long ago the Law our case decided!

Ere man was man, woman and he were one,  
Through common veins the life-bloods creep and run,  
Wise Time who loves to cleave the one in two  
Knits the same web the pristine marriage spun.

Small brains the chargers of the sun would guide  
And teach the moon a better path to glide  
Nor fear to meddle with a brittle glass—  
The love that lovers radiate from their side.

The redman's wizard to the pain applies  
His lips assured that comfort in them lies:  
Why are not we two dwellers of the plains?  
My heart is firm. My mouth to heal you cries.

Would not the slow touch of a worshipper  
On feet and brow the balm of peace confer ?

Ah, from your sweet flesh all the ghouls to ban  
With kisses cruciform and fresh as myrrh !

## XX

I worship three ways, upward, side to side  
And to and fro ; and if a fourth extension  
Inheres in things within this world desried  
I worship likewise in that fourth dimension.

But what ! there is a fourth dimension, showing  
Neither in lines nor cubes nor surfaces !  
You catch it in the eyes of violets blowing,  
You know it in the silent souls of trees.

O fourth dimension thou art Love, a land  
Most talked of and least trodden. From thy garden  
Circe the ruck of beasts who scoff has banned  
And nevermore will these thy lovers pardon.

## XXI

Speak, velvet robe, meandering dark and smoothly  
By curves most tender, cool and virgin-lined,  
Are you so sombre for that doubts uncouthly  
Will dim the brow that walls a serious mind ?

Ho, little ripple at the throat, where lace  
Throws coquetry on what should glisten fairly !  
Aha, wee smiles about the wrists that race—  
Laugh out, ye flowers, and ride your wavelets rarely !

For ye bewitch me threefold with your grace ;  
The solemn ground forebodes the grave and true  
When smile and frown dispute her rose-leaf face—

But ye, O blooms, the joy of her relenting !  
Then let me, robe in luck, confess to you  
What I have dared to dream, I unrepenting :

Receive from me upon your silken pile  
The longing from my heart's core's soul that rises,  
Drink in its essence well and firm the while  
You hedge her modesty from rude surprises ;  
Transfuse it gently like the influence rare  
Of perfume subtler than a thought of ether ;  
Steep her therein from ripe-corn-tassel hair  
To gentle feet, O breathe upon that breather

Of heavenly breaths my wish that may not brave  
Articulate speech but fills this desperate pressure  
And whispers you the meaning of my care ;

Such kind reception me henceforth may save  
From years of loneliness and slow despair—  
Tell her, smooth box, that holds my hope and treasure !

## XXII

A mariner worn dumb with sleety gales,  
Dogged and grim with travail of the sea,  
Before a harbor loops aloft his sails  
And rows ashore through the green surf to see  
If tidings lurk for him in foreign mails  
And as his tarry, awkward thumbs will tremble,  
Shuffling the letters, lest the keen sight fails  
To note one script, nor can he care dissemble,

So, dream of women, I enduring long  
The seas of anguish for your suffering,  
Trembled at each new batch the mail would fling

Of fateful letters till at last with song  
Unspoke, yet surging through my heart, was spied  
The script of her for whom so oft I cried ;

For whom so oft I cried in voiceless woe  
Sending my poor prayer through the alien gulf,  
Poor naked prayer that sought with aspect low  
To please the hostile dwelling as the wolf  
Is humbly passed by lambs that dread their foe !  
Then through the coal-black chamber it would steal  
To plant on feverish lips a dewy seal  
And breathe fresh courage on your tortured brow.

For you are mine ! Who else has aught to say  
When we have joined in rapture, side to side,  
Bosom to bosom ? when one goal alway

Beckons us both and we apart abide  
Content a little—then together rush  
To wait not hopeless for the grave's cool hush ?

XXIII

The very pavement sleeps, no echo jars  
The rigid walls, there broods a dreamy haze  
Within the network of the city trees,  
Deep in the dark nestle the flocks of stars ;  
Melts into dream the moon o'er cloudy bars  
Whereon the townshine slumbers, then one sees  
A sombre house-front gashed with light that flees  
Mysterious, leaving on the black no scars.

And we, lone watchers in a dormitory  
Gigantic, whose vast breathing comes and goes  
Deep like your sigh, rehearse the eternal story ;

The while my arms, a rough sheath for a rose  
So fragrant, seek to warm against the hoary  
Assaults of time a love that laughs at snows.

We only sleep not from the restlessness  
 Of love. Ah love unquiet, never done  
 With thirst for more than rightfully is won,  
 What curse is yours that from the close caress  
 You slip away sans warning, sans redress ?  
 Eternal conflict that must ever run  
 'Twixt man and woman ere our joy 's begun,  
 That cheats the more, the more it seems to bless !

For I approach not your ideal man  
 Pictured long since, him that is strong and true,  
 My breast will never fill his hero-span

Nor brain discover just your way to woo :  
 All faults are mine since first the world began—  
 And you . . . . . ?

## XXIV

If you were perfect I should love you less  
 Although perchance more purely :  
 Think you I ask that never worldly stress  
 Shall try your courage with a fierce excess  
 Or boast that you do naught if not demurely ?

To love you noblest I would mark in you  
 Of many a war the traces  
 Wherfrom you've risen as conquering and as true  
 As sun that freshly paints the vivid blue  
 When off the sky a wrack of cloud he chases.

And as in gardens men will tend an herb  
Of most exquisite savor  
Trailed under foot or growing too superb,  
So should my tenderness be prop or curb  
To your too weak or too intense endeavor.

To bear with you, to laugh and weep, to sin—  
There is no higher mission !  
What care we for the heights there are to win  
So the twin courage warm our hearts within  
To strive by hill and valley toward fruition ?

Dull were Niagara and his plunge to me  
Without his grand emotion,  
His waste of spray and foam, his boiling sea  
Of storm-tossed rapids drawn relentlessly,  
Glad and yet frightened to the deep green ocean !

xxv

What art is yours, woman of rounded limbs,  
That lets a sudden pallor make a cheat  
Of all your rose ? For know, right well I weet  
You've cared for me as for a bud that swims  
In leafy pool a little from your feet,  
Whereto you lean and with an outstretched wand  
Draw the odd blossom to your jewelled hand  
In hopes to find it for its hour sweet.

It were not strange, woman whose long kiss mads,  
 If then a chance-come slipping of the foot  
 Should fright you white. But what may be the art

That drives your blood against your frozen heart?  
 I am, alas, no magic lotus root  
 To drag you to me in the lily-pads!

## XXVI

So proud am I since you my mouth did praise,  
 So proud, my lips at all your sisters curl.  
 Was't pretty skill a bar thereby to raise  
 'Twixt me and every woman, wife or girl?  
 For these my lips henceforth may never touch  
 Others save two that praised them overmuch.

It seemed an outburst of unconscious truth,  
 Love's truth, that praising. Surely 'twas no mock?  
 Yet from that hour no fool, to tell you sooth,  
 Ere dreamed so silly o'er a cherished lock:  
 O cruel might, lodged in a word and smile  
 That could hard reason from her seat beguile!

Must you enwrap me in a selfish cloak  
 Whereof the web is, Am I now at best?  
 And woof composed of some such thought, unspoke,  
 As, Of her eyes how shall I stand the test?  
 Though mere a fool before I worshipped you,  
 Wise through your love, I now am foolish too.

No, no, 'tis false, no folly e'er was taken  
From your sad eyes and strangely parting lips !  
Your force is such that you the laws have shaken  
That bind mankind. At touch of finger-tips  
The meanest things than jewels dearer are ;  
The mouth you praise outshines the evening star.

XXVII

Happy day, nay, not so fleet,  
Rest you here a little while !  
Happy day, before you flutter  
O'er the green square, down the street,  
Wait, do wait, till I can utter  
Joyous thoughts that may your flight beguile.

Happy day, are you made sweet  
By your quickness, that so fast  
You must fly from those who love ?  
Fear you that too long a treat  
Makes us weary at the last ?  
Linger here till we the same disprove.

Happy day, I see you gliding  
Gently off before my say,  
Hola, happy day, I tell you fairly  
What I can with no deciding  
Pro or con, I'll tell you squarely  
What in you was sweetest, happy day.

First your birth : O whence procure,  
Happy day, your dewy lock ?  
The earth is old, yet childhood babbling  
Has not eyes more sinless-pure—  
But delay you will not brook !  
Just one fly's flight—and I stop my gabbling !

Do you mind you, in the morn,  
Of the swamp-lot's mysteries ?  
Happy day, the flower there  
In the heart of a gnarly thorn ?  
Ah, you spied it ? 'twas too fair  
And you fled before its witcheries.

Well then, come, I thank you first  
That you rose behind my back ;  
Always westward to one dwelling  
Stands my face and when you burst,  
From her roof the dark compelling,  
Who fled fast along your sparkling track ?

Happy day, a moment, prithee ;  
Thank you for your strong hot noon !  
Never could she dare that heat,  
But I crept, accomplice with thee,  
Through gold shadows her to meet . . .  
Whose fault, naughty day, the swoon ?

Listen to my thanks, glad day,  
Ere you sweep about your skirts  
Orange, purple, red, maroon,

Bends the deep sleeping sky ! And I to frown  
Against her brows and join, forsooth, the crowd  
Of whining grumblers and my lifework shroud  
With hampering coils, a brainsick, lovelorn clown !

O sky gray-blue, affectionate to me  
As the deep mother's-look I ne'er shall see,  
More beautiful than one who has no shame

Of the poor friendless one to make a game,  
I kneel, I hear. These lips henceforth shall be  
Forever sealed against her traitorous name !

XXXVI

An oval board, silver, great heaps of flowers,  
Bright glances, tender bosoms, brilliant dresses,  
Wine of four hues, a score of savory messes,  
A Babel of talk that up to the ceiling towers,  
Then, all at once—your name ! As when the dashes  
Of wind and hail are thick in stormy showers  
But through the midst a bolt of thunder crashes  
And in suspense hang all the cosmic powers—

So came the name a stranger spoke in praise ;  
And while I forced a trembling dull reply  
Striving to shake myself from my amaze

A little choir of angels in a sky  
Within my brain began a glorious hymn :  
The sea of despond then I learned to swim.

The sea of despond then to swim I learned,  
And inward swore that numbing stroke of wave,  
Nor blinding spray, nor scale-clad living grave,  
Nor foaming gulfs that hidden reefs have churned  
Should stay me from the purpose that abides  
Your life to own, your spirit to oppress,  
Your will to curb until the last caress  
Which in the fiercest woman's love resides

Should find me out and make you slave indeed  
Kneeling before your master ! Do your will,  
Be false, be true ; set forth your female skill,

Let love or anger in your bosom breed,  
I am resolved to have you, soon or late ;  
By hook or crook I am to be your mate !

## XXXVII

When first in all your glory  
You broke upon my vision  
Something like pain shot through my startled breast,  
Let not my simple story  
Rashly arouse derision  
But wait till you, tossed by a like unrest,

Feel your own life oppressed.  
As flowers droop all at once  
In the strong hour of blooming  
Midmost the wildwood's gloaming  
When the axe bares them to their lord's face, the sun's,  
    So was my boldness fled  
    So did I hang the head  
So did my choking heart drain from my cheeks the red.

XXXVIII

To sit beside you and reach out no hand ;  
To touch your dress, and give a frozen stare ;  
To speak, and frame an accent cool and bland ;  
To hear your voice and not kneel down in prayer !  
Hell's not so bad as that, for there despair  
Foams, shrieks, and gnashes, tears itself to win  
Some active respite from the pangs of sin  
And memories of the cool, seabreezy air.

But we . . . that civilization which has taught us  
To hide our love has not yet thither reached  
Where people stop before they're cold and rude.

Here, in the snarl our boasted culture's wrought us,  
We die before our selfish pride's impeached :  
We think the words, I love you, far too crude.

## XXXIX

Above the clink of knives and din,  
The babble of words at random flung  
And stealthy shuffle of men that bear the strange new  
covers in

I hear a voice that once has rung  
A passionate carol through my veins  
And at the sound I lose the phrase that falters on my  
tongue.

To hold my fork I am at pains :  
A silver floe with silver isles  
Tall, crowned with fruits and flowers—a view where she  
alone remains.

Though here be phrases, honied smiles,  
Indifference, ardor, truth and lies,  
I only see the face I swore was far too pure for wiles.

One look ! Before the sunset dies  
A gazer sees a semblance blurred  
On every side and with my sight it fares not otherwise.

She is so radiant, so unstirred !  
Could hers have been the billowy hair  
That flowed, a Mænad mane of love, all at a little word ?

'Twas not on mine that dewy pair  
Finer than pearls in her necklace lay . . .  
No, no ; some deeps in memory's tide 'tis treason to un-  
bare !

On eyes her liquid glances play  
As bows on cellos and her form  
The nerve-harp strikes like organ-tones where cardinals  
kneel to pray.

She emanates electric storm,  
Her graces are like fragrance's  
And at her lips audacious shapes of wit and wisdom  
swarm.

I most was warm when she would freeze  
And when she smiled I least would please ;  
Now, for the smallest crumb of hope, I'd bless her on  
my knees.

XL

To hear, not from, but of you—that is bitter,  
Yet know you love me after all a little !  
To leave me, yet exact the jot and tittle  
Of love's whole fealty while your comrades titter !

He you love more than any other shivers  
Out in the cold ; yet you to smile are willing  
On men you scorn, on men you would be killing  
With slow contempt . . . How your fine nostril  
quivers !

Why not have done ? Forsooth, because it tickles  
 Your mood no other maid shall hear me wooing !  
 Yourself you give not ; and shall none, undoing  
 Her gates, wipe off the foolish tear that trickles ?

Back, base-born thought from cells of matter sprung,  
 I would not, if I could, be a forgetter,  
 But I shall wear without a plaint my fetter  
 Till faith and strength and bravery right from my  
 wrong have wrung.

## XLI

I might not rest till I refreshed mine eyes :  
 Lo, in the funeral train how pale you stand !  
 A jet-black dress close to your figure lies,  
 A mighty sadness holds you in its hand ;  
 A lock of gold the crape vail open pries  
 Till in the church it needs no magic wand  
 You to a rare black tulip to transmute  
 Whose golden heart dreams of a heavenly fruit.

So pale ? for whom ? for that good hoary man  
 Gathered in peace to friends long gone before ?  
 Speak to me from the shadows ! Are you wan  
 Because, because I come to you no more ?  
 Do you regret a little ? Hear me ! Can  
 Hope like a wrestler cast doubt to the floor ?  
 Alas, I know not for whose face you sigh,  
 Nor do I care, so it can not be I.

## XLII

Not by one chant are famous songsters known,  
Landscapes are lauded not for one sole charm  
And separate breaths of cooling zephyrs blown  
But parch us more while steady gales from harm  
Of fiery suns protect; among the swarm  
Of glittering fry how few to size have grown!  
A thousand sheep of a Nevada farm  
Survive when snowdrifts overwhelm the one.

Could I amass in one concentrate whole  
The thoughts of you I scatter through the day  
And could I hit the vital heart and Pole

Of that wide sphere which secret ponderings build,  
Then had I found the word and way to say  
With what incarnate love my soul is filled.

## XLIII

I care not for the future. 'Tis enough  
That you allow me by your side to sit,  
Bliss like to this makes me for long months fit  
The world to insult and answer harsh with rough.  
I, like Antæus, find in you my earth  
And universal strengthener of my life,  
A mine of thoughts, a sea of sombre mirth,  
A cure for madness and a rest from strife.  
At your dear side I seem a maiden coy,  
My tongue gone lame with overweening joy.

## XLIV

What words I speak within my heart  
When I'm alone  
Are fit to employ the illumer's art  
Or his who graves on stone—  
So sad, so warm, so poignant-sweet are they,  
The fragrant words which to my heart I say.

The words, ah, those upon my tongue  
When you are by  
Are juice from starveling apples wrung,  
Spray where the spring runs dry—  
Ah, who shall guess what rivers understay  
The marsh of words which to your face I say !

## XLV

Against the bloom-tipped waves of woman heads  
And hedges black of fair-haired men in rows  
The dazzling sheen that every footlight sheds  
Prints on a living ground your quiet pose,  
Your neck, the subtle line of lip and nose  
Made sad and harmless by an eye that dreads  
Some coming woe, great antelope eye that spreads  
Its startled shadows through translucent brows !

These bear so hard on my assailed senses  
I fain would shout to break the enwrapping charm,  
The peace of yonder thousand glittering glances

I fain would snap with one quick war-alarm  
Or, would we might in some dim hushed alcove  
Sob out with Lucca's voice our close and speechless  
love !

XLVI

Who knows but that when we are dead  
These lines as deep shall buried lie,  
Who knows, some words of that now said  
From scribbled heaps shall chance to cry ?  
Who knows but from oblivion's bed  
Some one shall care these rhymes to pry—  
They like the Mexic calendar-stone  
Shall fame confer on you alone.

Rough though the calendar-stone, it frames  
Strange lore of skies and bygone races ;  
Secret by secret man reclaims  
The meanings lost of hideous faces,  
Star-wheels and rings, at last redeems  
The Indian past from low disgraces ;  
So shall a future age refit  
My love from out oblivion's pit.

## XLVII

I saw you last night with these eyes although  
Betwixt us rose and fell with stormy moan  
The Ocean. By its mimic brink alone  
I stood; around me listeners lolled in row;  
And when, a great beast with a single soul,  
The orchestra would flash Briareus arms  
Now up, now down—o'er the wild music stole  
Your white face whiter from approaching harms.

Andromeda forlorn! O hapless love,  
Victim self-bound by Mammon's brackish sea,  
How pale you sit freezing me from above,

Me, a poor Perseus who in agony  
Sans wings, sans sword, must watch the deadliest crime  
Man wreaks on man in hopes to baffle time.

## XLVIII

It is your sex which causes all my woe,  
Your sex defensive, always up in arms  
Against my ventures, for its restless fears  
Bank and abatis 'gainst my friendship throw.  
O that you were a man! for then alarms  
Would turn to close-knit amity, no shears  
Of Fate should snap; and so, along the vale  
Of lengthening years together we should sail.

How can a man love woman ? Is there not  
Always a contest, always some reserve ?  
Is, through her sex, a woman not a lie ?  
You are so nearly man—what cruel lot  
Was that which made the hand that shaped you swerve ?  
You, being hurt, utter no woman's cry  
And your indifference has a manly calm,  
Yet over you Venus has poured her balm.

How easily the old time poets used  
To weave their sensuous rhymes around their loves !  
Tropes, metaphors came marshalling out in droves,  
Nor once their mighty Romance tongues refused  
To mould the glorious phrases which amused  
And softened all their hearers. It behoves  
Me too a rugged but most copious tongue  
To shape in verses, shall be learned and sung ;

But I, alas, am too unhappy, long  
To tarry o'er the smoothing of a verse,  
Nor have I time to ponder on my lines :  
I can but jot me down a mournful song  
Which, after years, some lover may rehearse  
Who like me hurries and like me repines ;  
The beast of burden in his struggling years  
Finds time for little sport and fewer tears.

Those ancient poets stretched themselves at ease  
In trellised arbors on the flowery grass  
Under the cypress or the olive trees  
To sing the sweet perfections of some lass

With all the skill and learning which would please  
Spirits elect, high o'er the laboring mass :  
Queens, princes, bishops were at hand to applaud  
Each quaint and beautifully concocted fraud.

For frauds they were. Those poets had their wives  
Children and friends about their happy knees,  
And that is why as in their busy hives  
Bees fashion honey they confected these  
Fine scholarly old measures. So their lives  
Which sprang from genius grew to spreading trees  
Of perfect letters. Ah, but you know, lover  
Not all their polish can the love frauds cover !

Yet would I still devote my empty days  
To build to love in rhymes a classic tomb  
But that each week I fly a hundred ways  
A thousand things to do ; I go ; I come ;  
I palpitate with the gold-hunter's craze  
And curse my gold when I have brought it home  
And in this dry, remorseless atmosphere  
Grow white and thin with many a bootless fear.

Perhaps I err ; perhaps I were unable  
To weld my verses into forms of grace ;  
Perhaps this mind is so grief-worn, unstable,  
Though I should cease my silly fortune's chase  
I could not touch them. In the hoary fable  
Where hare with tortoise runs a losing race  
I'm with the hare ! Give the base turtle all—  
For though he win the prize, he still must crawl !

## XLIX

I ponder o'er this hand wherein the stars  
Have drawn the chart of my succeeding days.  
I stare : however steadfastly I gaze—  
Where runs a line which no bad fortune mars ?  
The line of fate meanders through a maze  
Of broken hopes and joy-dispelling bars,  
The path of love is spoiled by hateful jars  
Of mind and ruddy points that hint of craze.

The palm is generous but fickle, crossed  
By zigzag marks portending evil things,  
It is with loves, ambitions, doubts embossed,

'Tis all of earth, and yet has trace of wings.  
But still one joy remains, O dreary token !  
The mid point of the line of life is broken.

But what wrote they, the all too-truthful stars,  
Within the smooth white palm of her I praise ?  
What do their subtile darkness-splitting rays  
Inscribe therein with careless-seeming scars  
Before she learns her infant arm to raise,  
Before her close-clinched fingers she unbars ?  
'Twas written then how fierce her scorn should blaze  
And anger smoulder till herself it chars ;

'Twas then they sealed her to be Mammon's child.  
 Man cannot fight with fate. Ten sighs or groanings,  
 Twenty, a thousand, 'tis of little weight ;

Whether we fall to laughter or to moanings  
 The awful wheels we never can placate.  
 Despair ? It is a drug that makes not wild, but mild.

## L

In dreams among the hills,  
 The haunt of woodland rills,  
 Two lonely lakes once glimmered side by side.  
 One, clear as amber, drew  
 Against her heart the blue  
 And showed as lovely and as pure a tide.

The other oft with dust  
 From willows or with gust  
 Of wind-storm blackened or in tumult lay,  
 Or else within arose  
 The atom plant that blows  
 A turbid bloom throughout the waters gray.

And though that lake, I ween,  
 Longed for the fairy sheen  
 Of her the princess, his companion bright,  
 For fear his wave should foil  
 Her crystal wave and soil  
 He grieved and lingered in his own despite.

But O, the dream that craves  
To rise with stress of waves  
And drown the barriers that his love withhold !  
To cast upon her breast  
His heart in foam, and rest  
Deep within deep and blissful fold in fold !

Those lakes unhappy stay  
And lonely till the day  
Of terror when the earth and heavens run  
Together like the vault  
Where metals fine are smalt,  
When life is worthless, for of hope is none—

Then from their foolish sleep  
The lakes together leap  
And kiss and merge and mingle core with core ;  
Chiding with sighs and tears  
The grief of bygone years—  
Then laugh, then weep, then vow to part no more !

## LI

The ooze that beats against your pane,  
This night of mournful sound,  
It folds a cloak of inky stain  
My shuddering limbs around.

Where lamps like ruby glow-worms creep  
The streets all up and down  
I wander like a man asleep  
Whom thorns in slumber crown.

I reach the door. The tempest flaps  
Its wet wings in my face ;  
Your lights are quenched ; my feeble taps  
Away the storm-winds chase.

O if you knew that one caressed  
How tenderly stood there,  
Say, would you take me to your breast  
And banish my despair ?

Or would you, pitiless and rude,  
Still urge the frown and sneer ?  
To-night I am so meek of mood  
Meseems that death is near.

I only want, ere I am laid  
Prone in the quiet mold,  
To feel just once my winsome maid  
Her arms about me fold.

My little maid, whose plot it was  
To spend long years with me—  
O forenoons that as hours would pass !  
O chamber filled with glee !

Though I be dead your breath I'll feel,  
Your bosom soft I'll know,  
To my stiff lips a smile shall steal,  
My cheeks with red shall glow.

There in my straight bed I shall lie  
With palms close-joined in prayer  
Until you come to rest me by  
And heal my long despair.

LII

You will not die though she has left you, fool,  
But live right onward, drink, laugh, eat, wake, sleep,  
Do everything except to sigh and weep,  
You'll spend your time by compass and by rule ;  
Still will you sell for most and purchase cheap,  
Still strain to lead in the world's childish school,  
Through basenesses for money you will creep,  
Another woman make of you her tool : . . .

No, no, not that ! it cannot be ; for why  
Should I so far forget the golden past ?  
I am not bestial that I need be mated ;

Let the revolving years run slow or fast,  
Let them with every infamy come freighted,  
Her throne shall not be filled while I am I.

## LIII

You do not love him ! O, you need not hide  
Your face in smiles, for I have second sight ;  
In vain you simulate, for not more wide  
Is darkness from the light,  
Is earth from heaven apart  
Than an affection which is brain from that which is the  
heart.

Ay, had we met among the stilted throng,  
Seen and regarding, conscious, firmly nerved,  
Where lights and custom braved us both along,  
Then you had never swerved  
Then I had never seen  
The look of misery in the place where passion once has  
been.

O dreary gulf, toward which with obstinate  
Unnatural haste a suicide you press !  
Souls of your stamp unwisely when they mate  
Are stags, an angry stress,  
Are wild stags which a shock  
Knits by the antlers with a turn that death will not  
unlock.

You have the dying stag's look in your eyes,  
The hunted, you ; the dogs and hunter, you !  
Nor on us twain—be witnesses, O skies—

The worst of crimes you do,  
The crime that springs from whim !  
You sow the seed of wretchedness for souls to come—  
and him.

## LIV

And shall I never know the reasons plain,  
Why you discarded me and him did marry ?  
Was it that poverty's too fierce a strain ?

Or did you fear unwedded still to tarry  
Lest at the last you should accept my suit  
And so your plans of goody life miscarry ?

Or did you treat me as you would a brute  
That's well to play with but not keep at home,  
A bitter tasted but not ugly fruit

That ornaments the garden where you roam  
Bearing no more relation to your life  
Than bears the steamer to the light sea foam ?

O men will scream when the slow-moving knife  
Tears at the surface, but there comes no cry  
When to the hilt the sudden blade they drive,

And so I can most calmly, stifling sigh,  
Groan or fierce word, railing or stern contempt,  
Measure the wretched shipwreck where I lie.

For at the blow I felt at once exempt  
From any feeling good, bad, bright or dreary,  
Till all seems now only a horror dreamt;

I will not say that I am not most weary;  
Nothing in heaven and earth exists, I fear,  
So utterly lone as I, so lost, so eerie  
With strength left only at my poor self to sneer!

## LV

Over the roofs in search of your new home  
I stare in vain across the smoky town  
And from my beard the raindrops trickle down  
Soak through my breast and to my warm heart come  
From inmost chambers heat and life to drown  
And cause a void that hurts and harms me more  
Than blow or wound, than groan or wailing sore,  
Whereof the outmark is a whitening crown.

Since you, unhappy, in wicked haste were married  
The sea of roofs, harsh, without one green shore,  
Of my existence is the symbol drear.

How the dull maze of buildings can I clear?  
Each street yawns deep and cavernous and horrid.  
Life is too hard. Think! just a leap—'tis o'er.

LVI

It is not come, that joyful day  
When souls no longer foolish be,  
When those that love shall never stray  
Or fly the bonds will make them free.

O, had it come, we were not now  
Severed by God and man, ay, worst,  
Severed by hatred and the vow  
That maddened me, your nature cursed.

Why see our lives when all too late,  
Unscale our eyes when seeing 's pain ?  
Why groan, why writhe and cry on fate ?  
No herb can make us whole again.

LVII

I am so tired of all the ceaseless round  
Of food and sleep and work and gabble,  
I drag my feet like some one who is mired  
And speeches of old friendship have the sound  
Of the base windy rabble ;  
I am so tired !

I am so worn with following a dream  
That scarce I keep my bones together.  
Of men of sense I am the butt and scorn,  
I know they mock when furtive eyeballs gleam ;  
My life has broke its tether ;  
I am so worn !

I am so cold in marrow and in brain  
That mockery warms me ; for I know that scoffers  
Sneer to conceal the scars of combats old,  
Are ignorant, poor souls, or else they feign ;  
I care no more if good or evil offers,  
I am so cold !

LOUIS BARNAVAL

*PART III*



Leave me to the evening's gray ;  
Praise well-earned no person hurts ;  
If you scorn me, I shall sing the moon.

Thanks in fine for this that now  
One spot brightened by your rays  
Forms a saintly aureole  
Round her homestead like a brow—  
Day most gay in part and whole,  
First, but O, not last of happy days !

## XXVIII

Three tall cedars guard her dreams,  
Wardens three,  
Past their leaves the river gleams  
Nigh as fresh as her eyebeams,  
Nigh as bright  
Where the sun shines as the free  
Chestnut curls behind her throat ;  
Fair yachts on the tideway float,  
Her head rides in light.

Three tall cedars murmur low,  
Chide their fate,  
Men and waters come and go,  
Winds about her lattice blow,  
Flowers are sweet,  
Boats may hold her precious freight

Senseless stuffs her beauties wrap,  
 Blossoms touch her sacred lap,  
 Vines embrace her feet.'

Three tall cedars make their moan:

‘ Those are fond ;  
 Fixed for aye are we alone,  
 Our stiff branches upward grown  
 Cannot yearn  
 Toward our princess, break the bond,  
 Whelm her with our leafy showers ;  
 Peacocks raise their gold-eyed bowers  
 When love’s torches burn.’

Three tall cedars when I heard

Whispering sad,  
 Full of woe I took the word  
 ‘ Cedars tall, ’tis well to gird  
 At your fate,  
 Yet mine own is worse than mad,  
 For I walk, yet may not to her,  
 Though I knock, she’ll not undo her  
 Door though midnight wait.’

## XXIX

O gold-cup moon, brimm’d high with generous wine,  
 Pour, pour on her your wealth  
 Of amorous health,  
 On her I call, but with what folly, mine !

O thyme-steeped wind, with your fine feathery broom  
For rare new perfumes seek  
Each hidden creek  
And sweep them through her cool and shadowy room !

O treacherous tide swirling along the cove,  
From China spices rare  
And rich silks bear  
To cast them at the feet of her I love !

O fringing trees that sing to her in sleep,  
Stretch, stretch your green nets wide  
On every side  
And seize miasmas that should near her creep !

O bashful feet and foolish trembling hands,  
Be firm, be hardy each  
To aid his speech  
When next her lover by his true love stands !

O stammering tongue which each warm word outstrips,  
O timorous heart that now like dolphin dips,  
What though ye fail to serve ?  
There still is nerve  
For one mute passionate pleading of the lips.

XXX

I may not tell thee all the love I feel  
Nor may I to myself allow  
The full insanity which thou  
In this poor brain canst with thy breath instil.

With uttering of it all were at an end,  
 For to my speech such force must go  
 No strength were left to live with ; so  
 Some only-once-flared meteor were thy friend.

What though to see me in the socket flame  
 Should fill thy heart with fierce delight ?  
 Beware, lest love with unawaited might  
 Thee and thy calm soul should forever maim.

## XXXI

By lilac clouds, you crooked golden wire  
 That faintly hint where the wide moon must hide,  
 Why mind me this sad evening of a pride  
 That plays demure and towers the while the higher ?  
 Just so she turns her hid face pure as fire  
 One line's breadth more till I have reached her side ;  
 But when, alas ! her glorious grace should bide  
 Full on my face her anger is most dire.

Gold edge of moon, cold and of mystic power,  
 At whose warm full the flower of love shall blow,  
 You do not mock, even you must mellow at last,

But Arctic frosts on my poor buds are cast . . .  
 Sharp sacrificial knife, in this pale hour  
 Can you not flash from heaven and lay me low ?

XXXII

Safe in the vantage of her harbored state  
She rides at ease, but I must bear the stress  
Of outer storms, the waves unkind caress  
And our most harsh unequalness of fate ;

Yet may't not form, my lading of strong freight  
Joined to the rarefound virtues she doth hold,  
The alembic mystic, finer than fine gold,  
That only grows when ardent lovers mate ?

She will not run her ensign to the peak  
Nor signal to me how to cross the bars,  
She will not spread her dainty wings by night

To meet halfway, unite in one delight  
With yards enlocked, and so one haven seek  
Favored by magic from the double stars.

XXXIII

And must I feign and must I strain my heart,  
Turn cool aside when I would leap to her,  
Play a mean gamut with a sordid art  
And cheat, that her cool pulses shall but stir ?

O Love ! then love's a staple of the mart  
 That has no root and lives a life of chances  
 Where scarcity its wretched cost enhances—  
 ' Yon heap is vile—but rush to buy that quart. '

I will not chaffer and degrade us both,  
 I will not counterfeit the careless air  
 That dries my blood to powder. Rather be

The polar winter of a pure despair  
 Apart, alone ! Rather, the last time, see  
 In tears hope vanish gay-winged in the south !

## XXXIV

Future and past and things of now  
 Beyond us twain had sunk away  
 We asked not who nor where nor how,  
 When, by what right ; there was to say  
 That she and I were—nothing more.  
 Did not the touch of hers repay  
 My thin hand well and dry-dust core  
 Of thirsty longing throb sweet pain ?  
 So, while we wandered toward the shore  
 Still crept one thought along the brain :—  
 ' My lost and found, my lotus bud  
 Some demon's power below the main

Once dragged from pure air to the mud,  
Behold us met, and who knows why ?  
How came we hither ? fancies scud  
Through the poor memory's cloudy sky.  
Come, where the smooth and dazzling sand  
Cools chin in sea-foam we will lie  
And loose from love each prudish band !'

She spoke no word, sweet was her smile,  
Not weak but vague ; her little hand  
Did surely press my arm, the while  
We reached the shore, and lo, a throng  
Of youth at play in gay defile  
To silence did a sudden wrong.

Then back we turned to pass between  
Sheer gates of rock the stream along  
That ribboned down a vast ravine.  
There crag on crag, gray, ruddy, pearl  
Or purple-red or saffron-green,  
Soared straight on high or rode the swirl.

I felt her long breath shake my frame.  
Is passion so ? Or is the girl  
Thus artless ? Hollow came her name :  
' O here, my essence of desires,  
My world, my duty, God and fame,  
How soft within this gorge expires  
The long hot draining kiss of pain !

In amorous aromatic fires  
The dragon-fly himself has slain,  
His rustle stilled, no sound is heard  
Save hush of water through the plain.'

But to her lips rose never a word ;  
We saw the holm that splits the flood  
And see, on iris-bannered sward  
A joyous round of kindred stood  
Or lay bloom-heaped about the grass !  
Then shamed and desperate of mood  
I strode right on to find a pass  
Through which the brown hills forest-crowned  
Smiled fair ; how far more fair she was !  
She brushed, a candid shape, the ground,  
Her tireless feet in modish shoon ;  
Her garb was trim and hair smooth-bound,  
Calm was her face as harvest moon,  
Nor stone her stayed, nor brier held.  
But I ? a harsh voice out of tune  
And ragged garb and eyes compelled  
To set their madness on her face.  
Would words gain substance, sworn or yelled ?  
I could not ; onward was the pace,  
Hers even, mine a drunken reel.  
At last we came to some high place,  
A saw of trees : ‘ Ah here I feel  
How cedar wine of strong hope slips  
Within my veins ! for woe or weal  
Now part those firm and luscious lips ! ’  
But ere might come the thirsted sound,  
As loom through solid fog the ships,  
Upsprang a peopled pile from ground  
And stared us through with myriad eyes.  
Then touched by wrath I faced around ;

But fell that anger quick to rise ;  
One look at eyes of her, deep-set,  
Which said . . . ah, what? Nay, can surmise  
Be worse than those seared spots that fret  
The pupil 'neath her lizard lid  
As though hot steel the eyes had met,  
Chameleon eyes that ever bid  
Me come and come with opal change ?  
A charméd ring of fragrance slid  
From her calm form had closed its strange  
Dread band about a willing prey.  
Then far we left the spiky range  
And won o'er trackless moors a way  
To where young birches dip them steep  
Toward a dark tarn forever gray  
In brooding shades whereto you creep  
Through tunnelled yews of ghastly mien ;  
With damp the leafy arches weep.  
O there were kisses hot, I ween,  
On smooth cheeks, letting, but not mine ;  
And would God, then the leaves between  
Had death set there his final sign !  
Now by the tarn no being breathed,  
But swung o'erhead too glittering eyne ;  
Between gray wings a brown hawk wreathed  
His trackless spell ; thick woods near by  
Of tall smooth trees whereunder seethed  
A cling-leaf soil made black the sky  
And blackest where a hollow nook  
Was underlit with ghastly high

Straight flowers gray-white. These flame-like shook  
Their torchy heads and with a beam  
Of poisonous beauty filled the brook.  
She smiled as one who loves her dream.  
Then closely round luxurious lined  
Smooth limbs and frame parched members gleam  
And dry lips to their fountain wind :  
‘ Ay, here’s the spot and now the hour  
O straight red mouth that mads the mind !  
O calm eyes of unholy power !  
Here ends our path ; look, love-wan pyres  
Proclaim with many a torch the bower ;  
Bless me before the first expires !’  
She undulated by my side,  
On me she turned the unburned fires  
Of those seared eyes nor yet replied ;  
Then spoke. Good God, she found a tongue  
That held no wrath nor tone of pride . . .  
What was ’t, as sinuous close she clung  
And in my eyes the world reeled red  
While sinking clotted leaves among ? . . .  
‘ Remember, Sir, that I am wed.’

## XXXV

It was your mouth that so first wrought on me,  
Your red, fine mouth, no two days found alike,  
Now proudly gathered up for words that strike,  
Then fall’n in lines of softened ecstasy.

All day might pass, it still were heaven to see  
Closed lips like marshmallow flowers, vail the sight  
Of grace-anointed form and eyes that smite  
And laughing heal, that flash and stab and flee.

Next, ah, your hand ! which, touching unawares,  
So shocks my blood with a tumultuous joy  
I barely know some powers my peace destroy

And reason from me in a moment fares :  
But when near by your body's warmth I feel  
And your sweet breath—do you not see me reel ?

So harsh was I, you that shall never see  
These trifling lines, that morning gay and bright  
When we, approaching in what different plight,  
Stared, wondering, you—I dark and angrily !  
How I did hate you while a happy bee  
Boomed deep content and madcap butterflies  
About us chased and danced at childish cries  
All down the leaf-walk, yes, and while the glee  
Of twig-swung birds that should have shamed me kind

Wove in and out the formal tree-parade.  
But did you guess, O first my thought and last,  
How weak I turned when coldly we had passed,

How black the sky was, how I groped as blind,  
How the changed bird-song made my brain afraid ?  
No ; nor shall this true hand bring your clear brow a  
shade.

## XXXVII

Upon the stair, the narrow stair,  
A step, and lo, across my hair  
Steals something awesome like a hand,  
A windy hand from giant land !  
It cannot be, it cannot be  
My spirit's eyes the floating see  
Of some one's robe and feet that stand  
Upon the stair ?

Upon the stair, the narrow stair,  
The step not hers within my hair  
Thrills gently yet. But ah, I know  
A stranger mounts to trick me so !  
Accursèd graybeard, what has brought you,  
What evil meddling fiend has taught you  
Of some one's robe the rustling low  
Upon the stair ?

## XXXVIII

Now would she care, my lady far away,  
To know that down-hill where the maples talk  
And dips to rise the shadowy tree-hung walk  
One swaying spray of willow gives me stay ?  
Ay, would she care, though the mere outline balk  
My cheeks of blood, seeming in shades to mark  
Her dainty stride-swung garments white on dark,  
Then skim the hill deer-footed, stoop like hawk

And only find my folly? She might smile  
At silliness, then give a little sigh  
Of passing sadness and a tender look

As pays a bookwright for a slight, sad book;  
But she would start could my weak-chested cry  
Pierce with its choking grief through many a yawning  
mile.

XXXIX

I must, I must behold you, or I die!  
For one whole week have I not drowned my heart  
And somehow run, read, slept, worked, talked apart  
From actual life, nor uttered loud a sigh?  
But now is surely some disaster nigh  
If sans warm breast and soul-o'erthrowing lips,  
Sans form's and face's delicate ellipse  
Another day in agony goes by!

For when most sunk in lethargy, behold,  
Your noble head half-drooping from a frame  
Looked out with such sad sweetness that off-rolled

Hypocrisy like fumes! But all the flame  
Of my unquenchable love for you, firm will,  
Burst with such fell heat forth, only your hand can still!

## XL

Before the elysium of your kiss  
I doubt if you appear  
And on the very peak of bliss  
Still thread the vale of fear.

## XLI

It was the moon ; be sure it was the moon.  
I had not dared the balcony that night  
Save that I knew the maddening queen would soon  
Drop by the Orange mountains from the city's sight.

It was the moon ; think how the street lay black  
Gemm'd with star lamps where the green gardens  
slept ;  
Up the pure sky a hard-lined chimney stack  
Witch-painted wavering grew as downward still she  
crept.

It was the moon ; you stood in thickest shade  
With head leaned back and white throat curved for  
bliss ;  
I, quaking with love smothered, was afraid  
To seal your grief-thrilled lips with a soul-easing kiss.

Yes, 'twas the moon ; she filled your window-sash  
With sudden glory, glanced and turned my brain.  
Woman, the moon's dread power was in that flash :  
We bowed in long embrace to her transcendant  
reign.

## XLII

The rosebright night you felt my fingers glide  
Across your waist to where twin lotus bloom,  
The night I kissed your round neck in the gloom  
Within what space two turned their heads aside,  
That night I could have sworn you were all mine,  
Forever mine ; through time our lives should stride  
Close knit as new and old moon side by side,  
And mingle white as seven-times hued sunshine.

But by next noon the mirage far was scattered  
And love was whim and yielding but a sport,  
Your touch a friend's, your tongue was love's derid-  
ing . . .

Good God, is't so ? With falseness is no siding :  
Farewell, a wan knight issues from your court,  
His sword and true heart at your gateway shattered.

## XLIII

I hate you with a slow and deadly hate  
That burns within the red walls of my heart;  
I would not save you from the vilest fate  
But gladly sit and with your writhing sate  
The thirst for hate that of my soul is part.

Traitor to love, who for your sport and whim  
Must egg me on to spill my soul on you!  
Gave me good hope and still more hope—no dim  
Or doubtful signs—that soul and mind and limb,  
Yourself, your all, were mine own, full and true!

And then to whine and steadfast love protest  
And draw the mask and shed those lizard tears!  
Why not be bold? why not, the truth confessed  
For just this once, unload your guilty breast  
And show the game you've played me all these years?

The game of have and eat your cake, the game  
Of pretty sighs, hand-pressures, starts and kisses,  
The sport of love without the people's blame—  
A lover famished, fed upon a name  
And tortured by a thousand hoarded blisses!

You call that love? 'Tis an ignoble mind  
Will not assist a starving man with gold.  
But what of her whom jewels could not blind  
Who doles her love? too petty-souled to find  
A godlike joy in passions clear and bold?

I hate you, I lament you, I despise—  
As little a real woman as the flame  
You counterfeited has its spring and rise  
Aught deeper than your shifty-colored eyes:  
For womanhood with you is but a name.

I will not call you monster but a boy,  
A cool-veined boy, nor man, nor woman grown;  
Yet even boys grow warm for older blisses,  
As you shall find. O, when you thirst for kisses,  
May I be near to drink each fruitless moan!

## XLIV

Dare to be frank, O soul,  
Now that of mole-eyed night  
Fleeing the step of light  
Wimple and vail and gown  
Over the alien town  
Darker, more darkly roll.

Why did you turn away—  
Night from the dayspring's lance—  
From a true soul's advance?  
Why did you scorn the gem,  
Leave the pure fruit on stem  
For a mere toy of clay?

Why against right, with wrong  
Showed you, O strong one, love  
For the hawk, not the dove,  
Till the deep mother-dark  
Wearied of sigh and cark  
Breathed through unmanly song ?

Hapless—and yet your fate  
Still were ungrateful, came  
Answer to that wry flame !  
Songs ! Did they bring relief  
In that unsimple grief  
To your small bosom's freight ?

Forced by an inward bent,  
As toward a rent in walls  
Something a pale plant calls,  
So did you quit your ease :  
Now in the gale you freeze,  
Now is your summer spent.

Why did you turn again ?  
Ask of the rain its law ;  
Why should the rose's haw  
Spangle the snow-bound swamp ?  
Does the dark crimson lamp  
Of the wild rasp explain

Wherefore it glows unseen ?  
Gentians of queenly hue,  
Are ye of chance so blue ?  
Blackberry blossoms are white ;  
Read me one riddle aright :  
Why are the forests green ?

Reason, be sure, for it all ;  
Yet in each fall there's a breath  
Mingled of hope and of death.  
Flowers that bloomed not before  
Mate ere the norther may roar  
And the frost broiders their pall.

XLV

We must not doubt each other any more  
Nor longer rack our sympathies with fear  
That other faces may become more dear  
Or that one loves less warmly than before.  
O let us hoard the shreds of our delighting  
And scanty morsels of our meetings here,  
Long absences with burning love requiting,  
With sharp laughs drying each recurrent tear.

For both alike move onward unsupported ;  
Each has two souls, of which the soul at home  
Directs and plans as ever ; unescorted

The other far and far away will roam.  
Because the outsoul cleaves a distant air  
We look so pale and wan, and so forgetful stare.

## XLVI

O cruel stairs and cruel echoing halls  
That will not deaden every step that comes,  
Your careless sound with grievous rumbling falls  
Like beat on my tense heart of noisy drums.  
The step that soothes, the step your hard white walls  
Should yearn to echo, in its cadence sums  
The melody that in the streamlet foams,  
Each free sweet voice that in the wildwood calls.

That light, light step, will it, O God, arrive ?  
Whilst I, leaned faint within this darkened door  
With anguish as of sunken swimmers strive

Who see bright lands yet know they have no shore :  
Hopeless are arms that she will never fill,  
For though she came, I would be hopeless still.

Hush ! through the sounds and through the troubled airs  
I hear the whisper of her clinging gown :  
I know her weight is on the spiral stairs,  
And now I look on her lithe figure down.

See with what grace and pride without a frown  
She passes men ; see her beguiling hairs  
Demure of coil, all soft and harmless brown  
Till fine gold daggers stab you unawares.

And while she rises with her princess mien  
Behold the face wherfrom expressions look  
Like a deep autumn's daylight, clear, serene,  
A glorious title-page to O, what book !

Back, back then cares and in her coming drown—  
My light and love and life, my cross, my crown !

XLVII

A man lay wrecked upon a wizard's isle  
Thick fringed about with laces of salt foam ;  
At last he rose above the wave's recoil  
In quest of water round about to roam.  
And lo one spot rewarded languid toil  
Where life revived and where he saw a home,  
For there a fountain reared its fairy dome  
Of liquid crystal free from stain or soil.

But ere his hot lips touched that heavenly blue  
A woman's voice, with passionate warning tense,  
Prayed him avoid a thing of shame and rue,

Nor do, by Love most holy, that offense !  
The seaworn man made her the bitter vow,  
And when he died the fountain kissed his brow.

## XLVIII

Are these the arms once glad, now empty woe,  
That held a casket brimmed with spices warm ?  
These arms were moulded, so I surely know,  
To fit the white curves of your glorious form.  
Is half enough ? no, but it shall be so ;  
For I shall do no thinking from this day  
Save that long dreams of our delicious play  
Shall make my life with seeming radiance glow.

I feel my cheeks with your soft tresses brushed ;  
Between us blooms O, what a wondrous flower  
Red, red, blood red with four red petals crushed  
Close, close in one ! Now that the world lies hushed

Our wildly tossing hearts in this fierce hour  
Tremble within our breasts like bells that shake a tower.

## XLIX

How to awaken that within a soul  
Which makes it soul above all intellect,  
How to alarm a conscience yet uncheck'd  
By doubts of sudden and undreamed of goal !

How to chain up unwavering to its Pole  
A will that veers as caprice may direct  
And with a flood of magnetism affect  
Parts most indifferent and thus fuse the whole !

Ah, woe is me, who am a mortal born  
Full of half truths and fickle as the wave !  
It answers naught to answer scorn for scorn

Opposing bravery with a face as brave ;  
Behold, with thinking is the night outworn  
How from the flame of hell a brand to save.

L

How can you ask that I should kiss its face,  
That lovely clear face of the child we wrong,  
When scarcely hot lips and embraces long,  
By right its father's, have effaced their trace  
From our vile forms ? Does its sweet, noble grace  
Raise no wild thoughts that hardly should belong  
In head so fair ? Does the fresh childish song  
From your dark soul all hope of pardon chase ?

I cannot touch that frank bright face of him  
Nor shake in falseness some one's hand we know,  
I cannot act, for love or like or whim,

The caitiff's part and in feigned friendship bow,  
I will not play the hypocrite and brim  
My cup of crime with meanness. I will go.

## LI

Ay, one may school the passions to a calm  
And call each virtue singly to one's aid ;  
Forswear all lust and to one's pulse have said  
Time shall bring poppies and fierce action balm.  
But when it seemed I could withstand your charm  
And my wild blood and feel no more afraid,  
Within your sphere with careless foot I strayed,  
Nor in such coldness could foresee the harm.

Ah, woe is me for hate that's worse than luring,  
Your studied cold was hotter far than blame,  
My wicked flame flared in me past enduring

Though fall I must, and falling blot out your name !  
You prayed for grace, I begged for you, adjuring  
High heaven to see our last and crowning shame.

## LII

Ah, here you stand, and from the photograph  
Gaze out with drooping wrists, a little trace  
Of deprecation on a serious face,  
But not one glint of your outflashing laugh !

About your neck a rosary bears the staff  
Whereon Christ died ; against the bosom lace  
For background rich, the beads are all in place,  
Pleading with gentle gleams in your behalf.

What can they mean, the rosary and the cross ?  
The entreating look and lips apart to speak,  
The posture of a child that knows of wrong ?

Have you committed crimes untold by song  
And sins that make you now be bold, now meek,  
Next wild with all the hideous torture of your loss ?

LIII

When life was sweet to me beside the flood  
The tawny flood, the wild beast flood that yearns  
To break its bounds and ever watchful churns  
The Mississippi mud—

While life was new, to priests I went to school,  
A Jesuit school, a happy school that leaves  
Words in the memory, never a thought that grieves  
The cautious father's rule.

And well I learned the wondrous Catholic lore,  
That subtle lore, that cheerful lore akin  
With wisdom of the ancients, how to win  
Weal from the temple store,

How Christ the builder raised the fane of grace,  
And saints heaped grace, and martyrs grace on high,  
Filling an unseen granary to the sky  
    To feed a starving race.

And I would dream that there might dawn the day,  
The blissful day, the harrowing day wherein  
More than my share I might remit of sin,  
    And debts for sinners pay.

But now, alas, far otherwise I yearn,  
Impiously yearn, unbounded yearn for thee,  
Whose vicar, whose atonement I would be  
    For sins that bite and burn.

## LIV

I love you with a longing of the flesh,  
    Is not that sad ?  
I love with stings luxurious and bad  
Which yet along a strangely woven mesh  
Of lofty thoughts, self-sacrifice, restraint  
And crystal ardor clear of earthly taint

Wind in and out, until the weak soul's latticed in  
With heavenward flowering sprays bound by the snakes  
    of sin.

I long to mix with you in union wild :  
Is not that mad ?

I long to be in your soul's garment clad,  
Yea, from your sweet flesh win a carnal child,  
That in ourselves and in its face we see  
Proof of the everpresent Trinity :

For I, alas, glow with a love so deep and warm  
I want our double kiss wrought in a breathing form !

## LV

I come from the foaming tides of the town  
Up from the waste of humanity,  
I come from your foemen and friends all alone  
To where you are waiting so patiently.  
Here to the wide square hushed as a tomb  
Where there are house-fronts giving no heed,  
Silent, remote, where crimes interbreed,  
I come.

I come in the backset eddy of tide  
Out from the roaring pool of the mart,  
Here in the shade where you lurk and you bide  
His children just save you from breaking your heart.  
Did you say he was true and loves the warm home ?  
Though I lie, yet my fitful, my maddening embrace,  
Makes you long as before his hearth to disgrace—  
I come.

What if you said, ' This time is the last,  
 Henceforward a life of repentance and rue ! '  
 The bar of resistance is broken and passed :  
 Too proudly you love to be too proud to sue.  
 In the black cup of crime we have touched but the  
 scum,  
 Let us drink to the lees, let us love without stint !  
 Any crime in your arms ! Let me have but the hint !  
 I come !

## LVI

When time, the lovely python, met me in childhood's  
 hour  
 He seemed a playmate fit for laugh and sportive race,  
 Anon I paused aghast and on his pitiless face  
 Gazing would marvel long at his stupendous power.  
 Later the childish scales fall from my 'stonished  
 eyes.  
 Numbered are these my days, I know from now the  
 snake  
 About my busy feet, till they with palsy shake,  
 Slowly and surely nearing, ring on ring shall rise,  
  
 Shall cast each broken limb helpless upon the floor,  
 With smooth, grim, slimy head shall closely mouth me  
 o'er  
 Till the cold livid jaws clinch in my heart's warm core.

LVII

The noon is black, so black that scarcely now  
These inky loops with the pale page contrast,  
Yet see, in minding of the glorious past  
The sunlike flower of her white radiance blow !  
Now is the bare room gladder than the day  
And your deep charms and broken face and pale,  
Quivering like ocean just before the gale,  
Lie 'twixt my arms as that hushed night they lay !

Red bridal moths shoot swiftly overhead,  
The kisses come, quick drops on tempest-brink  
While shine your eyes two diamonds in the dark ;

Heaven and earth into one life-cell shrink  
Which, breathed with too much living, lies as dead  
While round the mad ellipse hurries an unseen spark.

LVIII

They tell me I am poisoned in the blood  
And say her touch is noxious : can it be  
That what is crisper to the lip than food,  
Fresher than dewdrops, wholesomer than the sea  
Can harm because above our silly heads  
No priest has waved enchantments ? As a brood  
Of twin blue pigeons in a sunshine flood  
Veering are those her eyes, and as o'er meads

Submerged the long wave rolls, now up, now down  
 With stately gait the tall and lissom grass,  
 So on her way that graceful one will pass  
 With rhythmic undulations in her gown.

How now? Is this the hell-witch? Be it even so.  
 Whence she has come so blessed, thither I long to go.

## LIX

The tiger's covert through a fragrance rare  
 Is known to Hindoos, O strange love of mine,  
 And rocks wherein the cobra has her lair  
 Spice with a deadly smell Brazilian air.

And so I start upon the threshold thine  
 A pure narcotic fragrance to perceive  
 As if clear gems were ashes at your shrine,  
 Arabian gums and ores from Afric mine.

And though I longed it had not left me leave,  
 So clasped was I with unseen arms of lust  
 Within whose sphere no man at hurt may grieve ;  
 Blisses unending through its slumber weave.

And when aside your clinging robe is thrust  
 Your eyes are azure censers scattering light—  
 Eyes that, when weary, seem in scorn to crust  
 A crater over with gray slag and dust . . .

O body frail, that holds a demon's might  
 To drag my soul to hell's eternal night !

LX

A scarab, emblem of the world,  
Gropes underground for many a year,  
The dragon-fly, his love wings furled,  
Haunts the dull ditch a shape of fear.

From foulness rover-beetles draw  
Ambrosial perfumes ; on the tree  
That suckles musky moths I saw  
The fetid gauze-fly's dance of glee :

And cantharids enjoy the leaf  
With sunset-purpled butterfly . . .  
Darling that grants me joy or grief,  
Who dares complain ? Ah, what am I ?

LXI

What thoughts are they that cease your scheming brain,  
What the ideals and longings of your heart ?  
How shall I learn when you have moved apart  
And so forearm against the o'erwhelming pain ?  
Must we alternate friend and foe remain  
Till death us part, or join for good—who knows ?  
Only from out life's dim and tangled skein  
There shapes for some a lovely living rose—

A thing to fondle, dote upon, adore,  
Clinging and smiling, moving ; speaks, laughs, plays  
And in itself the best of both contains :

O, let us long, since but this one remains,  
For such a fruit as those great women bore  
Who godlike from the looms of Raphael gaze !

## LXII

Do I put trust in spirits, God, and days  
To come with glory ? Yea, and here's my proof.  
Miracles form the touchstone of his praise  
And miracles hold not from us aloof.  
When in your arms I lie and strongly long  
That our twain flesh be one, 'tis done in part,  
But when in pearly chambers 'neath your heart  
Leaps our own child, O then a mighty song  
Of praise outwells from my most thankful heart  
Since by that miracle stands God confessed.

## LXIII

Speak to me—tell me—is this all ?  
Can I no closer get to you ?  
Why does an awful terror crawl  
About my heart ? I have been true,

You love me, yet a clammy wall  
Splits the warm unit into two.  
My God, nor constancy nor crime  
Can make us one, while time is time !

## LXIV

I will not live if this be all of life,  
I will not live if selfish-making trade  
Fill all my days to full and if, afraid  
Of my, of others' conscience, I wage strife  
Most cheap, ignoble and with meanness rife  
On them that such things equally degrade ;  
Nor can I live to love one who, no maid,  
Whate'er betide, can never be my wife !

Why then delay, since life has lost its smile  
And she I love, being fallen, cannot be  
Divorced henceforth from crawling doubts of guile—  
For, traitor once, why traitor not to me ?

Then, faint soul, why delay ? 'Tis such a little while  
And we must drink the waves of harsh eternity !

## LXV

Let me read you all your mind :  
You would like me best a priest  
Who would listen to the least  
Doubt or sin your brain could find.

With what rapture would you then  
 Throb dishevelled at my knee ;  
 Half you'd make a god of me,  
 Half a lover warm as men.

Heavenly rapture, passionate bliss  
 Such as only comes from blending  
 Sin and absolution, ending  
 Feasts of love with burning kiss !

That were something worth your while  
 Who are dull to those caresses  
 A mere common term expresses—  
 Virgin vows you must despoil !

For resistance whets you on  
 And for utter sacrifice  
 You are panting, if at price  
 Of a soul the deed is done.

## LXVI

So ! you have really joined the Mother Church,  
 The air's too bleak for you without the fold,  
 Negation's arid heights are cold, too cold !  
 You are no eagle to disdain a perch.  
 Now for the sake of peace your brains are sold

Into the keeping of an old confessor  
Who stands 'twixt you and heaven an intercessor,  
    His price your bandaged eyes. No more of bold  
Complaints at fate, no doubts of right or wrong,  
His shoulders are so broad, his faith so strong !

The fleecy curtains of the heavenly vault  
    Bathe all horizons in a cool clear light.  
They roll apart. Then do the yellow-white  
Niagaras of the sun the earth assault,  
    At once beginning the eternal fight  
'Twixt light and shade. Here is a merciless glare,  
Darkness the darker for the sun lies there,  
    And now we freeze and now we pant outright.  
In which are you ? the sunlight or the shade ?  
I love the temperate glow by thin clouds made.

LXVII

O when shall close the dry-rot days of pain  
And stinted love that parches to the marrow,  
O when shall all the raw scars of the harrow  
Be burgeoned o'er by cool and windblown grain ?  
When shall some great, free, winnowing whirlwind  
    strain  
The chaff-heap life of all that is not sorrow,  
Till corn no longer smacks of sod and furrow  
And nought save love's pure bolted bread remain ?

Never ; at birth the red stars in our palms  
Engraved the lines and portents of our meeting  
And traced in runes how loving would be cheating

And how our burns could not be healed by balms :  
We shook with fear and to our heart's wild beating  
Leapt to embrace through storm-forerunning calms.

## LXVIII

The dread blow—ah, the worst has come at last !  
Shadows are heavy, low my head is cast,  
A torrent of lies and lamentations drown  
All space and time. But, when the deepest down,  
    Why do I thrill  
At thought of that gold-vested warbler shrill,  
Bathed in May morning sunshine, high o'er the  
    swamp ?

Whilst he stood throbbing, coining his heart in song  
And spurning base things that to earth belong,  
He fixed him in my memory like the lamp  
Raised for sad tossers by the ocean's brim—  
A star that pricks the cloudy demon's limb,  
A pledge of this, that liars have not yet marred  
The point of gold on the archangel's sword.

LXIX

The empty shells wherein the ocean roars  
Its hollow memories of departed storms  
Lie beating with the breakers to and fro  
Not of the seas, rejected of the shores,  
Yet masquerading in their lifelike forms.  
What else do I, for whom this crippling woe  
Has open pried all secret-hiding doors,  
Whose vacant heart no fire or hoping warms,  
Whose cheek shall not with joyous daydreams glow ?

And now, arrived at those bepraiséd shores  
Where worldly-wise men prate of banished harms  
I can but sigh and wonder. Think they so ?  
Better smooth words, deceptions, lies ! Make haste,  
Before grim Truth destroys me in this waste.

LXX

But was it fair, O woman shrewdly cold,  
To use me one way, nor that way the best,  
Your bosom give to him and close your breast  
To me who by such tinfoil am fine gold ?  
The poet who resigned all you caressed  
With cool two fingers as at times a lute  
Which stands for show must sound for tuning lest  
It turn through lack of being loved a mute.

But him the coarse who has no sounding string,  
Nor aught to lift him from the stolid beast,  
You likewise pastured as his nature asked.

Say, was it fair the selfish man should feast  
On all your beauties while your pride so basked  
In that wide fame that came when I deigned sing ?

## LXXI

O'erwhelmed by grief when I to sleep at last  
And feverish rest relapse there comes a rumbling—  
A clattering, rolling noise of horses stumbling  
With heavy hoofs and sound of wheels turned fast ;  
And then I feel it is an ambulance  
Bearing a dead man to the pitiless slab  
Within the morgue. I hear the morning's blab :  
Who is he and why did he so ? the glance

Half pity, half aversion that will meet him ;  
And then an awful horror fills my soul :  
What if that thing be I ? or what, O dread,

If it be she ! The dreary questions roll  
This way and that across my spell-bound head  
Till sun is here and I with curses greet him.

LXXII

Through the abatis, the rank wilderness  
And jungle growths that now my path oppress  
What help or way or loophole shall be mine ?  
To right and left and either quarter twine  
The giant creepers cant, hypocrisy,  
False witness, cringing and dishonesty ;  
Want rears a mountain bulk and world's ill-will  
Spreads its morasses on my footway still.  
Is 't not enough ? Alas, my limbs are lame  
And pulses sluggish and my wits run tame  
At knowledge damning, bitter, bleak as hell,  
That she is worthless whom I love so well !

LXXIII

Woman I loved, woman for whom there still  
Lingers a fondness born in happier days,  
Well may you sigh, well may your eyeballs fill  
With sorrowful tears. Your pallid face betrays  
The awful truth I fell upon, alas,  
The truth foreshadowed ere it came to pass—  
Of seeming love, dry as the sunburnt grass !

You cannot love ! Trembling you know that truth.  
Whilst I lay soft, him you perforce betrayed,  
Yet might that pass. Alas, beyond all sooth  
Was crime of her who to a third pipe played.

Yes, you were false to me, to him, to all,  
 Blinely you swayed to each base passion's call,  
 Yet worst of any was your own deep fall.

O naked one, what anguish ! Magdalen  
 Stood high o'er you. For her there's hope of bliss  
 But how with one for whom the noisome den  
 Of her own heart with torments aye shall hiss ?  
 A hell on earth as terrible and lone,  
 A painted sepulchre of hardened stone—  
 Within, a living corpse that dare not groan.

Which was it—vanity, or fleshwarm lust,  
 Or thirst for ventures that set on the spur  
 To rouse my passions till methought the dust  
 Whereon you trod smelled rarer than sweet myrrh ?  
 Whate'er it was, yet were you often kind  
 And though love was not there, I always mind  
 The gifts you gave, the rights that you resigned.

## LXXIV

My heart's a place once holy. Doorways blow  
 Uncertain to the winds that pipe through heaven.  
 No idol stands in alcove, to and fro  
 The tarnished curtains gustily are driven,  
 All pictures from the hard walls long ago  
 Were scraped, and not one friendly form, forgiven,  
 Lingers to tell of all the sinners shriven  
 And lovely saints who knelt in pious woe.

The owl and bat, the nighthmoth and the spider  
Are tenants here, at times a spectre steals  
Half real half moonshine o'er the crumbling floor,

A noisome gibbering spectre, a derider  
Of so much awe as yet the precinct feels.  
It goes, and from the roof drops one stone more.

LXXV

In civil war when vultureheaded spite  
So tore men's spleen that honor fled in fear  
Into a village fount with devilish jeer  
An enemy let fall a mineral bright.

Bright was the stone and merrily, merrily fell  
With circling flashes toward the hidden ground,  
And when the villagers returned they found  
A sweet soft taste in water from their well.

But while they praised each in the other's face  
Looked, starting at the shadows deepening,  
Then was no time despairing hands to wring,  
For each grew rigid on his standingplace.

Just such a poison with a mocking laugh,  
Fell in the waters of a life unstirred  
And turned them sweet while slaying. Now the bird  
Drinks a sure death that from that spring would quaff.

## LXXVI

I own my fault, but ah, the pain  
To feel the rough skin binding slow  
About my knees and in my brain  
That phrase beat to and fro !

Last night when I so hotly sware,  
Your cool words 'O my lover, know  
Your heart is clean or else beware !'  
Fell with an icy blow.

Smile not so deadly. See, the hide  
Has gripped the arms that used to throw  
Dart against hind ! But I shall bide  
Grovelling in dust and woe.

Pity me ! Ah, one wave of kind  
Remembrance of our mutual glow !  
One human look before I'm blind,  
One warm hand's touch bestow !

How fast they creep ! Along the ground  
I roll in hideous, clammy flow.  
Before these lips refuse a sound  
Kiss me—before I go !

## LXXVII

‘ How fair a day ! ’ I heard a passer cry.

The sun has brimmed up with excess of life  
The pretty eyes of flowret, bird and pool  
That joyously from swamp and orchard peep,  
Has thrilled the elms with happy coo of doves,  
Painted their tops with glory, and has brewed  
Within the sap-cells sparkling wines of health.  
The cedarbirds are rollicking in shade  
And from the woody meads the bobolink  
Must skyward tower to ease his heart of joy.

But I am downcast, languid, full of dusk,  
Remorses, cries of anger. Wholesomeness  
Or health is not for this poor broken frame  
That trails the feet, until I wonder, listless,  
If men are ever paralyzed by woe.

Here past the Palisades that eastward look  
Pensive across the Hudson estuary  
A little brook runs by a ruined wall  
That framed a home one century ago.  
Before its gaping portal, empty now  
And basking-place for innocent lithe snakes,  
Drew bridle once the greatest rebel known  
Through all Virginia’s thinly peopled woods.  
See him with martial pomp and etiquette  
Of ceremonious days alight in state,  
Enter, partake of an abundant cheer

And speak not till, the wine upon the board,  
Grave Washington addresses host and staff.  
But soon alert, they're off to yonder ridge  
Whence sea and river craft, the British fleet,  
Manhattan's earthworks and Manhattan's town  
Are seen as in a military map.

Now roofless and of tiles and timber stripped,  
Slowly the siftings of the unrestful air,  
With here and there a mass of silt in spring  
When freshets rise, have filled the basement up.  
Then the wise helpful pinegrove ran its young  
And hardy skirmishers before. The van  
Drew near and every summer strewed a rain  
Of needles to complete with rug of brown  
The tapestry of mullein-dotted wall.  
Ay, think you this a lovers' trysting-place  
Or camp for families long in cities penned,  
The oblong room with stones of softest gray,  
Floors brown, roof blue, with windy organ-loft  
And green orchestrion of encircling pines ?  
For here will romp the screaming jays, and crows  
In great battalions cawing wheel and rise,  
The partridge drums and flighty woodpeckers  
Here cackling play, and bright-eyed in the dusk  
Half seen, half felt, from tops to coping wall  
The soft-winged squirrels draw their graceful arcs.

O but I tell you it is all a sham !  
No beauty's here, no rest, no quietude.

A horrible place, that draws me like a charm !  
Look, on the needles there ! the very spot  
Where stood perchance the good man's Holland bed,  
Are not the needles browner ? Browner ! Black !  
Red, blood-red, nay, all scarlet ! O, he knew,  
The stealthy fox I one day caught at gaze  
On just that spot ! And yet thereover slept  
The colonist when home he brought his spouse  
Blooming and rosy at the jests of friends.  
There slumbered sunburnt honesty, there born  
Were sturdy rogues who fought with Washington.  
But such brought blessings. Crime since then has come  
If each year finds the needles with that mark.

That bloodstain was not there when first I saw  
This ruined home. A clinging cobweb rain  
Filled the whole vale and roused the whippoorwills  
In dripping thickets till the forest rang  
With answering throbs as fast as throats could strain.  
The rain was nature's protest. It would fain  
Have damped the infernal chemics man compounds  
To slaughter man. Against the crime the birds,  
Ominous nighthaunters with the dreary owl,  
Clamored a shrill dissent. The morning I  
Thought was my last and therefore loved them not  
That filled my final moments with their jar.

No anger knew my heart, but sympathy  
For that pale man who took his doomful stand  
Where now the mark fades never. Who was I

To harbor hatred, in whose hand was placed  
A shining something? I, about to pass  
Beneath the sod, away from sun and cloud?  
Mine was the fault. And there the wrong'd man stood  
Court, jury, judge and sheriff, all in one.

I glanced farewell to cloudy heaven and tops  
Of horrorstruck fixed pines, whose every leaf  
Was sharp like ears to catch the sound of death.  
Then, what surprise to feel, instead of fear,  
Delight to know that from yon steady ring  
Aimed at my heart the iron call should clang!  
Then into memory flashed bright days of yore,  
A thousand in a second, all the hours  
Of quiet rest, of anguish, transport, pain  
Swam swiftly by, and I, spectator moved  
At my own tragedy, was thrilled with awe,  
As if, great actor in the grandest scene,  
I could be audience, actor, scene and all!

Next, one long breath of God's air, one long smile  
At my good friend—slowly, I slowly turned  
My weapon toward the ground. Fire!! My God,  
'twas he,  
Not I who lay there dying! He, 'twas he!  
And I, who longed to die—I lived, I lived!  
O too hard fate, there on the moist brown mat  
He that my hand slew, not my will, writhed, died!  
But left behind a legacy unasked,  
Signed by his eyes, of horror and contempt—  
The awful look that will not quit my brain!

LXXVIII

How long, O God, to be that captive jinn  
Whom Hassan netted in the briny sea,  
How long be held like him this frame within  
Beneath the wise king's mark of mastery ?  
O if at once the skeleton fisherman  
Would haul his seine and break the hampering seals,  
What joy to burst from the dull bottle's span  
And while my soul into the wide void steals,  
  
Feel the hot limbs asunder fly and merge  
A weary brain with spells of long, vague rest,  
Know in my veins of shade and stream the surge,  
  
And hurricanes wail and thunder through my breast,  
Until each atom from its comrade blown  
Bides by itself, moveless, a speck alone.

THE END













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